

# Travelling With CF

Travel is very rewarding and filled with the unexpected. Take some time to plan and enjoy your adventure. Here is a list of things to consider (usual travel precautions apply).



**CFNZ**  
Travel guide for people  
with Cystic Fibrosis

<http://goo.gl/jZdgZs>

**CF CANADA**  
Travel tips for Cystic  
Fibrosis

<http://goo.gl/1qHAV9>

## RESEARCH YOUR DESTINATION WELL

- Do you need specific visas?
- What vaccinations do you need?
- Is there high altitude, humidity or any health concerns, e.g. bird flu?
- What language is spoken? Do you need a phrase book?
- Is Wi-Fi available?
- Do you need a pre-paid mobile card?
- Do you need an adapter to charge your phone or other devices?
- Is travel reliable, e.g. buses, boats, etc?

Check the latest travel advice for your destination and subscribe to receive free email notification each time the travel advice for your destination is updated.

## RECIPROCAL HEALTH CARE AGREEMENTS

You can get help with the cost of essential medical treatment in these countries:

- New Zealand, United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, Italy, Belgium, Malta, Slovenia, and Norway.

**You will need to provide local authorities with:**

- Your Australian passport, or another valid passport, which shows you are a permanent Australian resident.
- A valid Medicare card - if you do not have a valid Medicare card or your card will expire whilst you are away, visit a DHS Service Centre before you travel overseas for a new card.

- It is important you tell medical staff in the country you are visiting that you want to be treated under the Reciprocal Health Care Agreement with Australia.
- Medicine is not usually subsidised under the Reciprocal Health Care Agreements for Australian residents travelling overseas. If you are planning to travel overseas with Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicine for you or someone travelling with you, it is important to check beforehand if it will be available or take enough medicine with you.

## What if there is no Reciprocal Health Care Agreement?


- Make sure you are well before you enter into a foreign country.
- Have a plan should you get sick, e.g. travel as quickly as possible, either home or to a country that has a reciprocal health policy.
- Take plenty of precautions, e.g. be strict with hand washing and hygiene.
- Take out health insurance. If only getting general health cover and not cover for CF, some countries are very expensive if requiring medical treatment.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Some people find it difficult to get insurance for CF and choose only to get general health insurance.

- Travel insurance companies and their policies are on the internet.
- Most have Product Disclosure Statements which set out the terms and conditions, what cover is included





and the exclusions. It is very important to look at the definition of pre-existing conditions (PEC).

- Travel insurance companies who may cover your illness or disability are Cover More, Columbus Direct, Travel Scene Insurance, City Bond SureTravel and World Assist.
- You can call and ask the travel insurance companies whether they will cover you.
- It is worthwhile asking your travel agent or an insurance broker if they can get you coverage.

<http://www.chronicillness.org.au/index.php/travel-insurance>

## HEALTH PREPARATION

- Speak to your CF clinic about your plans to travel so that they can help prepare you.
- Get a full health check beforehand. Many people get a full “tune-up” just prior to travel to ensure that they are at their best.
- Get all prescriptions and medications for the time needed whilst away (both trade and generic names).
- Get letters from your CF clinic explaining your diagnosis, medications and equipment, especially if requiring a compressor, oxygen bottle or insulin.
- Have the CF clinic contact details.
- Have a summary of current health status, usual antibiotics and possible treatments for an exacerbation.
- Get copies of letters and prescriptions, leaving some in several places.
- A 'fitness to fly' letter may be required with some airlines; check in advance.
- If knowing your destination, research the location of the local CF clinic.
- Travel nebulisers are available for loan from Cystic Fibrosis WA.

## MEDICATIONS

- All countries have regulations about medications, so it's important to check beforehand about these regulations.
- Some countries may not stock particular medications, so if possible, it's important to carry ALL your medications with you unless there is a reciprocal health agreement where you are travelling. Check beforehand if these countries are likely to stock your medications.
- Carry ALL scripts with you.
- Take your Medicare number with you – this is necessary under the Reciprocal Health Care Agreement.
- Make sure all medications are clearly labelled and in their original bottles and left unopened unless using.
- Keep essential medications as carry-on luggage.
- Notify the airline well before travelling if needing to use any needles or other devices on the plane.
- Be ready with your letter explaining that you have CF and all your medications prior to boarding the plane.
- If you are travelling with heat-sensitive medications, get a good pharmaceutical-grade ice pack for long-distance travel and see if your airline can refrigerate medication and the ice pack.
- FRIO cooling wallet. The FRIO wallet is activated by immersing in cold water for 5-7 minutes. After towel-drying, the outside of the wallet is dry to touch. The FRIO wallet is able to maintain its cold temperature for a minimum of 45 hours through the evaporation of the water.

It can then be reactivated with cold water and used again. For more information go to [www.frioinsulincoolingcase.com/](http://www.frioinsulincoolingcase.com/) and to purchase go to [www.allergyfacts.org.au/online-store](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au/online-store)

### TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Leave plenty of time to get a passport and other visas.
- Make copies of passport, credit cards, travel insurance, Medicare number and any other documents, leaving one at home.
- Oxygen levels on flights can be reduced which probably won't affect most people however, it's important to discuss this with your CF team to see if a drop in blood oxygen levels is something that might affect you. If this is the case, oxygen can be an option.
- If oxygen is required, it can sometimes be supplied by the airline, however, needs to be requested at least two weeks in advance as it needs to be approved by the airline beforehand. Your CF clinic can assist with this.
- Wheel chairs are also an option and can be made available by the airline if given adequate notice. Allow extra time to check in if this is required.
- Keep well hydrated.

### EATING, DRINKING & CROSS INFECTION

- Regularly use hand sanitiser.
- Wash hands well and frequently, particularly after exchanging money.
- Use bottled water if unsure of local drinking water.
- Avoid ice cubes, juice mixes and other sources of possible contaminated water.
- If in a hot climate, take electrolytes or salt tablets.
- Wash all fruit and vegetables with a safe source or peel.
- Avoid food from street stalls and kiosks.
- Avoid non-pasteurised foods, e.g. dairy products, honey, etc.
- Take extra enzymes for high-fat foods.
- Watch alcohol intake as it may make antibiotics non-effective.

