

# COPD and Travel

COPD does not have to keep you from traveling, but you do need to plan ahead. Even when taking a day trip, use this COPD travel checklist to help you prepare.

## Before you make plans, talk with your healthcare provider

- Tell the provider where you are planning to go and for how long.
- Ask if it is okay for you to travel.
- Ask for a letter to take on your trip. The letter should contain:
  - The provider's name and contact information
  - A list of your health conditions and current medicines
  - A description of any medical equipment you need

**Are you traveling to a different time zone, a higher altitude, or an area with more air pollution?**  
Ask your provider if your treatment plan needs to change.

## Talk with your provider about your treatment plan

Here are some questions you may want to ask. Write down the answers.



*Do I need to adjust my medicine schedule during the trip?*

Yes  No



*Will I need portable oxygen while traveling?\**

Yes  No



*Do I need any vaccines or special medicines for the trip?*

Yes  No



*What should I do if I have trouble breathing while on the trip?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



*How can I stay healthy while traveling?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



*Other questions to ask my provider:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*Air is thinner (has less oxygen) at higher altitudes. You may need portable oxygen if you take an airplane or go to a higher altitude.

## Call your insurance company

- Ask if you will be covered while on your trip. If not, you may need extra insurance.
- Ask what to do if you need medical care while you are away.
- Carry your insurance card with you on your trip.

## Prepare and pack your medicines

- Carry all medicines in their original containers or boxes with prescription labels.
- Keep medicines with you at all times. Pack them in a carry-on bag, not in checked luggage.
- Pack enough medicine for the entire trip. Include extra medicine in case you stay longer.
  - If you think you will need a refill while you are away, talk with your provider or pharmacist
- Store medicines away from heat and direct sunlight.

## Arrange for traveling with oxygen (if you need it)

Are you traveling by airplane, train, bus, or boat? Before you make plans, find out the rules for traveling with oxygen.

- Let your home equipment provider know that you are traveling. Your home equipment provider can:
  - Help make sure you have enough oxygen for the trip
  - Help you fill out any required medical forms
  - Answer questions you have about traveling with oxygen
- Make sure you bring your oxygen prescription with you.
- Arrive early at the airport or the bus or train station. Plan for delays.

### **If you travel by car:**

Oxygen equipment must be fastened securely in an upright position. This will keep the equipment stable during the trip.

## Stay safe on your trip

No matter where you go or how you get there, be sure to stay safe.

- Pace yourself. Allow for extra time while traveling.
- Take breaks when you need them and get plenty of sleep.
- Wear your medical alert bracelet.
- Wash and sanitize your hands to help prevent infections.
- Ask for help when you need it. For example, call ahead to request a wheelchair in the airport.

**Before you travel, talk with your healthcare provider about COPD and how to best manage it while you are away. Proper planning can help you have a safe and enjoyable trip.**



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