

## **1. How does the American Diabetes Association help travelers with diabetes?**

The American Diabetes Association continues to advocate for the rights travelers with diabetes. We work with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to ensure that passengers with diabetes have access to their diabetes supplies and equipment, especially during those times when the nation's security threat level rises and screeners must react quickly to changes in security checkpoint screening protocol. While we hope that you will not encounter any problems in travel because of your diabetes, we depend on you to keep us aware of any difficulties so that we can provide feedback to TSA. If, at the end of your travels, you wish to report problems to us, please contact us at 1-800-DIABETES (342-2383).

## **2. What are some general tips as I prepare to travel?**

- Arrive at the airport 2-3 hours prior to flight
- Review TSA's website for travel updates at [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)
- Download [My TSA Mobile App](#)
- Whenever possible, bring prescription labels for medication and medical devices (while not required by TSA, making them available will make the security process go more quickly)
- Pack medications in a separate clear, sealable bag. Bags that are placed in your carry-on luggage need to be removed and separated from your other belongings for screening.
- Keep a quick-acting source of glucose to treat low blood glucose as well as an easy-to-carry snack such as a nutrition bar
- Carry or wear medical identification and carry contact information for your physician
- Pack extra supplies
- Be patient with lines, delays, and new screening procedures

## **3. Am I allowed to bring my diabetes supplies with me on the plane?**

Yes. TSA specifically states that diabetes-related supplies, equipment, and medication, including liquids, are allowed through the checkpoint once they have been properly screened by X-ray or hand inspection. Passengers should declare these items and separate them from other belongings before screening begins. Some of the things you can bring include, but are not limited to:

- Insulin and insulin loaded dispensing products (vials or boxes of individual vials, jet injectors, biojectors, epipens, infusers, and unlimited numbers of unused syringes when accompanied by insulin).
- Lancets, blood glucose meters, blood glucose meter test strips, alcohol swabs, meter-testing solutions
- Insulin pump and insulin pump supplies when accompanied by insulin
- Glucagon emergency kit
- Continuous blood glucose monitors
- Urine ketone test strips
- Unlimited number of used syringes when transported in sharps or similar disposal container
- Liquids (including water, juice, or liquid nutrition) or gels over 3.4 ounces

#### **4. Can I speak to anyone at TSA before I travel?**

Yes. TSA recently launched [TSA Cares](#), a new helpline number designed to assist travelers with disabilities and medical conditions. Travelers may call TSA Cares toll free at 1-855-787-2227 72 hours prior to traveling with questions about screening policies, procedures and what to expect at the security checkpoint. TSA Cares serves as an additional, dedicated resource specifically for passengers with disabilities, medical conditions or other circumstances or their loved ones who want to prepare for the screening process prior to flying. The hours of operation for the TSA Cares helpline are Monday through Friday 8 a.m.-11 p.m. EST, and weekends and holidays 9:00 a.m.-11 p.m. EST. Travelers who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to contact TSA Cares or can e-mail [TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov](mailto:TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov).

#### **5. Can anyone help me at the airport?**

More than 2,600 Transportation Security Officers (TSO), Lead TSOs, and Supervisors now have a dual role as [Passenger Support Specialists](#) (PSS). In addition to their regular checkpoint duties, these individuals support passengers who may be in need of assistance. A traveler who needs assistance or is concerned about his or her screening can ask a checkpoint officer or supervisor for a Passenger Support Specialist at the respective checkpoint. Or, if TSA personnel recognize someone is having difficulty, a PSS could be called to ask whether assistance is needed. They receive enhanced training directly from experts in the field of a variety of disabilities and from individuals with disabilities themselves. This training includes additional instruction in civil rights for individuals with disabilities and medical conditions, and strategies for providing assistance with dignity and respect. TSA tries to have a PSS available during all screening checkpoint operating hours. If a traveler believes he or she may need to request the assistance of a Passenger Support Specialist, he or she is encouraged to arrive at the airport early and immediately ask an officer or supervisor for a PSS.

#### **6. How do the full-body scanners and patdowns impact me?**

Currently, both traditional metal detectors and Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT) scanners are in use at most airports and you may be directed to either one by an officer. If AIT is available, you can request to use it instead of a metal detector. If you choose a full patdown or if you are subjected to additional screening because you alarm a metal detector, you have a right to have this screening done in private and with a witness of your choice. For more information on these screening procedures, see [www.tsa.gov/approach/tech/ait/index.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/approach/tech/ait/index.shtm) and [www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/pat-downs](http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/pat-downs).

#### **7. Are there additional screening procedures for individuals who use pumps and continuous blood glucose monitors?**

TS's published policy on insulin pumps is the following:

If a passenger uses an insulin pump, he or she can be screened without disconnecting from the pump. However, it is important for the passenger to inform the officer conducting the screening about the pump before the screening process begins.

Passengers who have insulin pumps can be screened using imaging technology, metal detector, or a thorough patdown. A passenger can request to be screened by patdown in lieu of imaging technology.

Regardless of whether the passenger is screened using imaging technology or metal detector, the passenger's insulin pump is subject to additional screening. Under most circumstances, this will include the passenger conducting a self patdown of the insulin pump followed by an explosive trace detection sampling of the hands.

[www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/passengers-diabetes](http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/passengers-diabetes). If you go through an AIT scanner and the image shows an irregularity, the type of additional screening you receive will depend on how many irregularities appear and where they are located on your body.

**If you have questions about the safety of wearing your devices through scanners, you should contact your manufacturer. Some manufacturers recommend that you not go through AIT scanners with your devices, while others have no such contraindications.** Travelers who use insulin pumps and/or continuous blood glucose monitors have the right to decide whether to be screened by AIT scanners or to request a patdown. Because recommendations for devices are different, TSA does not have a blanket policy for screening all insulin pumps in the same way. TSOs should never tell you to take off your devices, tell you that you need to keep them on and go through AIT scanners, or tell you that you can't go through the AIT scanners—it is your choice.

The Association sometimes receives reports from travelers who are subject to overly intrusive screening because they use insulin pumps and CGMs. If you believe that you have been treated unfairly on account of your diabetes, please contact 1-800-DIABETES and ask how you can speak with a legal advocate.

## **8. Do my diabetes supplies need to go through the X-ray baggage scanner?**

No. TSA states that “if the passenger does not want a liquid, gel, or aerosol X-rayed or opened for additional screening, he or she should inform the officer before screening begins. Additional screening of the passenger and his or her property may be required, which may include a patdown.” Keep in mind that you must request an alternative inspection before the screening process begins otherwise your supplies will undergo X-ray inspection. You should separate your supplies from your other property in a pouch or bag.

To prevent contamination or damage to medication and associated supplies and/or fragile medical materials, you should be asked at the security checkpoint to display, handle, and repack your own supplies during the inspection process. Any medication and/or associated supplies that cannot be cleared must be submitted for X-ray screening. If you refuse, you might not be permitted to carry your medications and related supplies into the sterile area.

## **9. What if my insulin, liquids, and gels are more than 3.4 ounces?**

Despite the general rule prohibiting passengers from bringing most liquids and gels through security, people with diabetes may take their insulin, other medications such as Smylin, Byetta, and Glucagon, and other liquids and gels, including juice and cake gel, through TSA checkpoints, even if they are in containers greater than 3.4 ounces. All medical liquids in containers greater than 3.4 ounces must be removed from your carry-on luggage and declared to TSA. They should not be placed in the quart-sized zip-top bag used for non-medical liquids, and they will receive additional screening. Although TSA does allow multiple containers of liquid or gel to treat hypoglycemia, as a practical matter you may want to consider alternative forms of carbohydrates, including glucose tablets, hard candy, or raisins.

Under normal conditions, insulin can safely pass through X-ray machines at airport terminals. If you have concerns about X-rays, you can request hand inspection. However, insulin never should be placed in checked baggage. It could be affected by severe changes in pressure and temperature. Inspect your insulin before injecting each dose. If you notice anything unusual about the appearance of your insulin or you notice that your insulin needs are changing, call your doctor.

#### **10. What can I do if I have a problem?**

If you have an immediate problem while being screened, you should ask for a Passenger Support Specialist or supervisor. If your problem is not resolved, you can ask for the TSA's Customer Service Manager for that airport. You can also call the TSA Contact Center at 1-866-289-9673.

After your trip concludes, you may also want to make a complaint. If you believe you have been subject to unfair treatment because of your diabetes, please call us at 1-800-DIABETES to find out how you can speak with a legal advocate.

[Complaints](#) about discriminatory treatment by TSA personnel can be directed to TSA. You can submit a complaint by email to [TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov](mailto:TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov).

#### **11. What if I have been treated unfairly by someone other than a TSA employee?**

If you think you have experienced discriminatory treatment by air carrier personnel (pilots, flight attendants, gate agents or check-in counter personnel), you should contact your air carrier and you may also make a complaint with the Department of Transportation's Aviation Consumer Protection Division (ACPD). You may call the ACPD at 1-202-366-2220 or see its informational page at [airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/problems.htm](http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/problems.htm). More information on where travelers may file complaints for travel service problems is available here: [airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/DiscrimComplaintsContacts.htm](http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/DiscrimComplaintsContacts.htm).

**Important Note: This fact sheet describing the legal rights of individuals with diabetes is for your general information and review only, and is not to be construed as a substitute for the advice of legal counsel.**