

Travelling When You Have Cancer

Planning a vacation or trip can give you something to look forward too. It can be relaxing and fun. It is possible to travel during or after your cancer treatment. When you or the person you are travelling with has cancer, it is important to **plan ahead**. There are things you need to do before you travel.

1. **Talk to your doctor** before you travel. Ask if you are able to travel or when you can travel.
2. **Write down the information** about your diagnosis, the medications you are taking, your treatment plan, a list of your allergies and how to contact your doctor. Keep this information and a list of other emergency phone numbers with you while you travel. You might want to have this information translated if you are travelling to a country where English is not the first language.
3. **Buy travel insurance.** Always call your insurance company **before** you travel. If you are told you are uninsurable, ask to have a policy made just for you. Be honest and upfront with the insurance company. Though it can be costly, you can offset premiums by asking to pay a deductible. For example, you could pay the first \$5000 of the cost of medical treatment. Always read your policy carefully. You need to know how long you are approved for. You may want to buy trip cancellation and interruption insurance. If your trip home is delayed, call your insurance company right away to let them know. Ask to have your coverage extended. Call your insurance company right away if you need medical treatment while travelling.
4. **Are you travelling with prescription drugs?** It is important to pack all of your medications in your carry-on bag instead of your checked luggage. If possible, bring an extra supply of your medications in case your return trip is delayed. You need to keep your medications in their original containers. You may be asked to show these containers to the customs officials. You will need to have a note from your doctor if you use oxygen, have syringes and needles for medications or if you are taking pain medications. This note will need to explain why you need these supplies or medications. If you will be in a different time zone, ask your doctor to tell you when you will need to take your medications. Find out if the country you are going to has your medication available in case you need a new prescription (for example: if your medications get lost or stolen). You need to have a copy of your prescription with you.
5. **Are you travelling out of province?** Be sure to show your Ontario Health Card (OHIP) before any medical care is given to you. Keep all of the original receipts for any medical care you pay for. You will need to submit these to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care within 12 months after you receive care. Contact Service Ontario before you travel to find out what coverage you have. This is because different provinces charge different rates. Call Service Ontario at **1-866-532-3161** or go to their website at: health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/ohip/outofprovince/travellers.aspx for more information.

For more information, go to the Government of Canada's website found at this link:

travel.gc.ca/travelling/documents/travel-insurance. Ask to talk to a social worker at the cancer centre if you have any questions or concerns about the information in this handout.

This handout was created by the Patient Education Program at the Durham Regional Cancer Centre/Lakeridge Health. It was last reviewed in June 2024.