

Travel Tips for People with Asthma

This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Whether travelling across the world or across town, a person with asthma has to be careful to prepare for a new environment.

Welcome to CDC Audio Rounds. I'm Dr. Elizabeth Herman, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Asthma Control Program.

A clinician's guidance can help patients plan for a symptom-free trip. Patients should prepare an asthma travel kit that includes all the controller and rescue medications needed for the duration of the travel, an updated asthma action plan, and any spacers or asthma-related devices that are used. This kit should be packed in carry-on luggage when travelling by air.

During the office visit, make sure immunizations are up-to-date, including the annual flu shot. Discuss measures to reduce the risk of respiratory infections, including frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizers. Review the patient's asthma triggers and discuss strategies for avoiding them. Encourage patients to ask for a smoke-free hotel room, or better yet, look for lodging that doesn't permit smoking at all. A patient who has pollen allergies should avoid travel to destinations during peak pollen season. Patients allergic to dust mites can travel with their own dust-impermeable mattress and pillow covers. If travel plans include staying in a home, encourage patients to ask about potential asthma triggers, such as pets or smoke, and, if necessary, consider alternate accommodations.

Patients with asthma should know how to recognize and respond to worsening symptoms. Advise your patients to keep your contact information with them, and to identify a local clinician in the area they will be visiting. This may help to avoid an emergency room visit. Encourage patients to tell travel companions how they can help if asthma symptoms occur.

The goal of good asthma care is to be symptom-free and fully active, including being able to travel.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/asthma.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.