

DiabetesSource™

News For The Diabetes Specialist

Spring 2000 ♦ Vol. 3 No. 2



IT'S A BIRD...
IT'S A PLANE...

It's Susan Spakowitz going to San Diego!

CONGRATULATIONS to Susan Spakowitz, CDE from Wilkinson Medical Clinic in Hartland, Wisconsin. Susan won FREE airfare to San Diego for the upcoming AADE meeting in August.

Paddock Laboratories thanks the 750 CDEs who completed the entry form enclosed with the Winter 2000 issue of DiabetesSource.

Join Team Diabetes To make a difference.

An event of American Diabetes Association

The challenge... a marathon is a celebration of human spirit. Join a group of dedicated people preparing for a unique event while making a commitment to overcome a great challenge... the fight to find a cure for diabetes.

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Traveling with Diabetes: Be Prepared!

Tywonja Giles, RN, MSN, CDE
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St. Dominic Hospital ♦ Jackson, Mississippi

For many people, traveling is one of the highlights of their lives. Anticipation of visiting family and friends, traveling abroad, and cruising create feelings of excitement. But for many diabetic patients feelings of discouragement and fear arise. Even though patients have diabetes, they can still enjoy traveling and all the benefits that accompany it. Careful pre-travel planning will not only allow patients to manage their diabetes while on the road, but also experience the fun and excitement that traveling can bring. As soon as patients know their destination, mode of transportation and length of stay, they can begin taking the following steps toward a healthier, happier, and uneventful travel experience.

Medical Check Up

Patients should schedule an appointment with their physician 4-6 weeks before departure. If traveling abroad for an extended stay, an appointment should be scheduled at least 2-3 months in advance. These time frames will allow physicians to assess a patient's general health status, make needed changes in the treatment regimen and evaluate changes before the patient is scheduled to travel. It is advisable that the patient's travel companion(s) accompany them on the office visit so that they will be aware of the patient's medical needs and be able to assist if needed during travel. While there, patients should inquire about medications for diarrhea and motion-sickness. These problems can not only interfere with travel, but also with diabetes management. Consultation with a diabetes educator and dietitian for reviewing diabetes survival skills will provide extra reinforcement.

Meals/Snacks

Patients should notify the airline several days before departure concerning specific dietary requests in order to avoid interruptions in scheduled meal times. To avoid potential hypoglycemic episodes as a result of unexpected travel delays and missed meals, patients should be reminded to carry snacks and sources of both simple and complex carbohydrates during flight times and when venturing away from their hotel.

Identification

Patients should always carry and wear a form of medical identification while traveling, that indicates they have diabetes. Identification should be in the form of a necklace or bracelet and a wallet ID card. A medical ID will be useful in expediting treatment in emergency situations.

Insurance/Emergency Phone Numbers

A crucial part of pre-travel planning is a review of current health insurance coverage. Many health insurance plans have limitations for medical care incurred abroad. Patients should review their current health insurance plan(s) and, if necessary, obtain coverage for foreign travel. When purchasing insurance for foreign travel, medical assistance and cancellation coverage should be part of the purchase options. Medical assistance coverage provides for locating competent local medical assistance, coordinating care with the physician back home, medical expenses incurred overseas, evacuation expenses and transportation for an accompanying companion. Cancellation insurance provides for luggage loss, health emergency cancellations, and carrier cancellation or default. Medicare recipients should



Mark Your Calendar!

Upcoming Meetings

American Diabetes Association
(60th Scientific Session)

◆ June 9 - 13, 2000 - San Antonio, TX

**American Association of
Diabetes Educators**
(27th Annual Meeting)

◆ August 9-13, 2000 - San Diego, CA

Team Management of Diabetes

A Health Professional Training Program

Offered in an environment of open communication and professional collaboration, this program is a stimulating blend of learning and hands-on experience. International Diabetes Center (IDC) faculty lectures provide up-to-the-minute, research-based clinical diabetes management techniques and tools, while a concurrent patient education program offers immediate opportunities to see the application of what you learn.

Lectures and course electives are designed to meet the specific needs of health professionals who care for people with diabetes. Upcoming dates for the program include:

- ◆ June 19 - 23, 2000
- ◆ July 10 - 14, 2000
- ◆ August 21 - 25, 2000
- ◆ September 11 - 15, 2000

Cost of the program is \$900.

Call 1.888.825.6315
for more information.

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be advised that medical expenses incurred outside the United States are not covered by Medicare. Travelers should carry an emergency contact phone number and insurance identification card with them at all times.

Travel Medicine Clinics/Immunizations

Patients should contact their public health department for up-to-date information on specific immunization requirements for their destination. Travel medicine clinics are also useful in providing immunization requirements and advice on hazardous travel areas. The American Diabetes Association hotline (1.800.342.2383) and the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (1.716.754.4883) are excellent resources for providing additional information.

Crossing Time Zones/Foreign Travel

Traveling across several time zones can make blood glucoses difficult to control. If patients will be traveling across time zones, they should ask their physician or diabetes educator if an adjustment in their medication schedule and meal times will be necessary. A time change of more than three hours will probably require an adjustment to the patient's meal and medication schedule. Adjustments to meal times, timing of medications and blood glucose monitoring are especially important for Type 1 diabetics. However, patients taking oral glycemic medications probably won't need to adjust doses for time changes. If flying will be the primary mode of transportation, patients should try to fly during daylight hours to help minimize meal and medication schedule disruptions. For patients planning to visit foreign countries, it's advisable to learn phrases in the language(s) of the countries they plan to visit. Patients should learn how to say, "I have diabetes," "I need a doctor," and "sugar" for seeking medical assistance.

Packing/Check List

When packing, patients should pack double the amount of supplies they will need in the event of travel delays or other unscheduled disruptions. Essential items include: medications for diabetes and other conditions, monitoring supplies, simple and complex carbohydrate sources, first aid kit, medical ID, insurance ID, emergency contact phone number, physician phone number, and prescriptions for medications, supplies and eye-glasses/contacts. It is extremely important that a letter from the patient's physician is included with documents. Physician documentation (on office letterhead) should describe patient's medical condition(s) and specific medications and supplies needed. It is important that the necessity for traveling with syringes is included in the documentation to alleviate delays that could occur in the event of a baggage search. All documentation and prescriptions should be written in English and, if applicable, in the language of the patient's destination. Due to the possibility of lost luggage, supplies and documents should be packed in the patient's carry-on travel bag. Remembering to pack everything needed for a trip can be stressful. A pre-travel check list will not only help patients plan, prepare, and organize for their trip, but also help them remember the things they'll need to bring as well as the things they'll need to do while away from home.

Whether traveling by boat, bus, car, or plane, patients with diabetes face many challenges while traveling. With careful pre-travel consultation and planning, patients can conquer the challenges and be on their way to a healthier and enjoyable trip. *Bon Voyage!*

References available upon request.

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