

# Tips for Summer Travel with an Ostomy

Summer travel is right around the corner. Traveling with an ostomy can be intimidating but that shouldn't deter you from going. Look at what you have already overcome! You just need a little extra planning and preparation to make sure you have a good trip.

## **Before you go:**

Have a plan in case you need medical care while you are away. Learn about the medical resources in your travel location. Consider getting an aisle seat close to the bathroom when making plane reservations. You can apply for Pre ✓ status through the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and fill out a TSA Notification Card. Phone the TSA Cares helpline at 855-787-2227 (at least 72 hours before prior to your flight) and arrange for a TSA "Passenger Support Specialist" to assist you through security screening. Figure out how many supplies you will need and then take twice that amount. Pack your supplies in your carry-on bag. You may want to pre-cut some of your pouches before you pack them. Don't forget any accessory products you may need and plastic bags to dispose of your pouches. Take antidiarrheal medication and electrolyte powder that you can add to bottled water, like Gatorade or Pedialyte. Bring a note from your doctor explaining your medical condition(s), medications you take and contact information. If you will be staying out of town for a prolonged period, ask your supply company if they can send your supplies to your summer address.

## **Traveling by plane, train or automobile:**

Arrive early at the airport to allow time for screening. Separate medically-necessary liquids and equipment from other belongings. Empty your pouch before entering the security line and before getting on the plane. Communicate your specific needs to the TSA officer before screening begins (Notification card). Before the flight takes off, you may want to inform your flight attendant that you may need to use the restroom even when the "fasten seatbelt" sign is on. Stay hydrated! To avoid gas, watch what you eat and skip the carbonated drinks and gum chewing. It's a myth that your pouch is affected by cabin pressure. If traveling by car, keep your supplies in a cool place, out of the sun.

## **During your vacation:**

Monitor your pouch wear time which might be less due to sweat, humid climates and swimming. Protect your stoma from the sun's rays by wearing loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing that covers your abdomen. Wear sunscreen but be careful that it doesn't interfere with your pouch adherence. Keep hydrated but take precautions with water and ice, especially in developing countries. Bottled water is your best bet, not just for drinking but also for irrigating your ostomy, cleaning your pouch and brushing your teeth. Remember that many foods are washed with water, so be careful. Keep extra supplies with you when you go out. Stay cool, look for shady places when you're outdoors. Be healthy and safe and have fun, you deserve it! Happy travels!

## **Resources:**

- Transportation Security Administration <https://www.tsa.gov/>
- Traveler's Health – CDC <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>
- United Ostomy Association [http://www.ostomy.org/Ostomy\\_Travel\\_Tips.html](http://www.ostomy.org/Ostomy_Travel_Tips.html)

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