

Checklist: Travelling with allergy, asthma or anaphylaxis

Plan ahead

You may need to request the following from your doctor or nurse practitioner:

- Prescriptions to cover your trip.
- Letter about medications you need to take.
- Special vaccinations.
- Updated ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis and ASCIA Travel Plan if you are carrying an adrenaline (epinephrine) injector (e.g. EpiPen). You may wish to photograph these onto your mobile phone together with your prescriptions.
- Medical report for your travel insurance policy, if required.

Medication

- Take enough for your trip, and some spare in case you get delayed, lose it or need a higher dose.
- Make sure medicines have not expired or will not expire whilst you are travelling.
- If you have been prescribed adrenaline injectors, you should always carry these with you, including when travelling. You should check if it is possible to replace the adrenaline injectors if they are used.
- Take medication in original packaging. This reduces the risk of having problems with security and customs when leaving Australia or New Zealand as there are regulations about exporting government subsidised medicines. There may also be problems with security and customs when entering other countries.
- Carry essential medicines in your hand luggage. Adrenaline injectors should not be packed into checked-in luggage or in overhead lockers. They must be easily accessible at all times.

Vaccination

- Respiratory infections can trigger asthma so it is advised to consider influenza and other available vaccination. If egg allergic, the influenza vaccine can usually be given safely. For more information go to the ASCIA website www.allergy.org.au/patients/food-allergy/egg-allergy-flu-vaccine.
- If you need other egg-containing vaccines, you will need specialist advice.

Travel Plan for Anaphylaxis

- Download an ASCIA Travel Plan for people at risk of anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) from the ASCIA website www.allergy.org.au/hp/ascia-plans-action-and-treatment#r3 and have it completed by your doctor or nurse practitioner. This helps if you are carrying adrenaline injectors in hand luggage and through security and customs.

Notify travel agent and airline/s about food allergy

- Contact the airline/s to determine their food allergy policies well in advance of travel and before you book tickets.
- Tell your travel agent and airline/s about your food allergy in advance.

Insurance

- Have adequate travel insurance.
- Ensure the policy covers your medical condition. Special approval may be required.
- Check if there are any special conditions, such as a medical certificate or an additional fee to cover anaphylaxis.

Hospital and other medical facilities

- At your travel destination/s determine the location and contact details of emergency facilities and have these details available in case they are needed.
- Ensure that you have a way of contacting emergency services, such as your mobile phone.

Accommodation

- For food allergy, consider self-catering accommodation, which gives you the option of safely preparing food for yourself.
- When booking, enquire about relevant inhalant allergen risk (such as pets) if you have significant asthma or allergic rhinitis (hay fever) symptoms.
- Speak with your doctor if you often become unwell when away from home. Some people have medications increased or commenced for the time of the travel.

When boarding (airline or ship)

- Notify ship or airline attendants when you board about your allergies and indicate the location of your ASCIA Action Plan and adrenaline injector (if prescribed).
- If an allergic reaction occurs while travelling, follow your ASCIA Action Plan and notify travel attendants so they can assist if needed.
- You may also wish to notify passengers around you, particularly to reduce the likelihood that food may be offered to young children with food allergy.
- Consider taking your own supply of food, bearing in mind restrictions on liquids for international flights. This is particularly important when considering the bottle size of antihistamine liquid or baby formula.
- Consider wiping down tables and armrests to remove possible residual food allergens (contact can sometimes trigger mild allergic symptoms).
- While fumes or dust from inhaled food allergen might cause allergic rhinitis (hay fever) or mild asthma symptoms, the risks of severe allergic reactions is very low unless the food is actually eaten.
- Some airlines offer “exclusion zones” (not serving allergenic food within a few rows of the allergic person). While this can be requested, availability cannot be guaranteed. Since the effectiveness of ‘exclusion zones’ has not yet been researched, it is unknown whether this is an effective strategy to reduce the risk of allergen exposure.
- Keep emergency medication with you in hand luggage. If you are travelling with adrenaline injectors, keep these with you or under the seat in front of you and NOT in the overhead locker. You need to be able to access your adrenaline injectors with your seatbelt fastened.

Language cards

- If travelling to non-English speaking countries and eating out, consider purchasing foreign language travel cards that warn about your allergy to show to food service staff.

Patient support organisations

You may wish to contact your local patient support organisation for further information or advice:

- Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia www.allergyfacts.org.au
- Allergy New Zealand www.allergy.org.nz

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For more information go to www.allergy.org.au

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