



# Travelling with Medication

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If an individual has a pre-existing medical condition, such as asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure or heart problems, it is likely they will take prescription medication when they go abroad.

Having a medical condition and carrying prescription medication shouldn't stop our clients from enjoying their trip. However, it does mean they might have to take some extra steps to ensure the medication is kept safe and that they are allowed to carry it with them.

## Is the medication a controlled drug?

It is common for drugs that are legal in Canada to be considered illegal in some other countries, to require a prescription, or to cause suspicion among local officials and the customs and immigration authorities.

Many strong painkillers, sleeping tablets, anxiety medicines, ADHD tablets, and some other medicines are classed as controlled drugs. If clients are taking regular medicines, you may wish to advise them to check with their physician if any of those medications are controlled drugs.

Different countries have different regulations for which medications they allow into the country and the maximum amount you can carry. This applies to controlled drugs, but also to some medicines that aren't controlled and even some medicines available over the counter.

For example, Ritalin is banned in Dubai, and strong painkillers such as Tramadol are banned in some states in the USA and other parts of the world. Diazepam (first marketed as Valium) is banned in Greece, Japan and the UAE and all codeine products are banned in Greece, Hong Kong and Indonesia. Perhaps most surprising, decongestants that you can get for a common cold, are actually banned in Japan.

It is always best for consumers to contact the foreign government offices accredited to Canada of the country they plan to visit to confirm the status of their medication.

## Can you take medication in carry-on baggage?

It is always best to pack all medications in carry-on baggage. Check-in baggage can be lost or delayed, so carrying it with you is always safer.

It is very important that clients don't try and combine their medications into a single container. They should also carry their medications in the original, labelled containers to facilitate airport security and customs screening.

It is also advisable for the client to carry a letter from their doctor with their name, countries they are visiting and details of all the medication they are taking and why. Regardless of what medication they are taking (including tablets and inhalers), they should always take a copy of their prescription in case of loss or theft.

Travellers do not need to worry about liquid restrictions when it comes to prescription medication as it is exempt. It must be presented to the airport security separately from your baggage. Share these tips with your clients to ensure they have no trouble travelling with their medications. ♦

## Top tips for travelling with prescription medication

1. **Be prepared** – check with your pharmacist or physician if you are taking a controlled drug.
2. **Be aware** that some drugs, including non-prescription medicines, are forbidden in certain countries.
3. **Always** keep your medication in its original packaging and keep a copy of your prescription in case it is lost or stolen.
4. **Carry a letter** from your doctor with your name, the countries you're visiting and the details of all the medication you're taking and why.
5. **Keep** your medication in your carry-on baggage but consider packing a spare supply of medication in your hold luggage.
6. **Take enough** medication with you for the whole trip – medication bought abroad can be counterfeit.