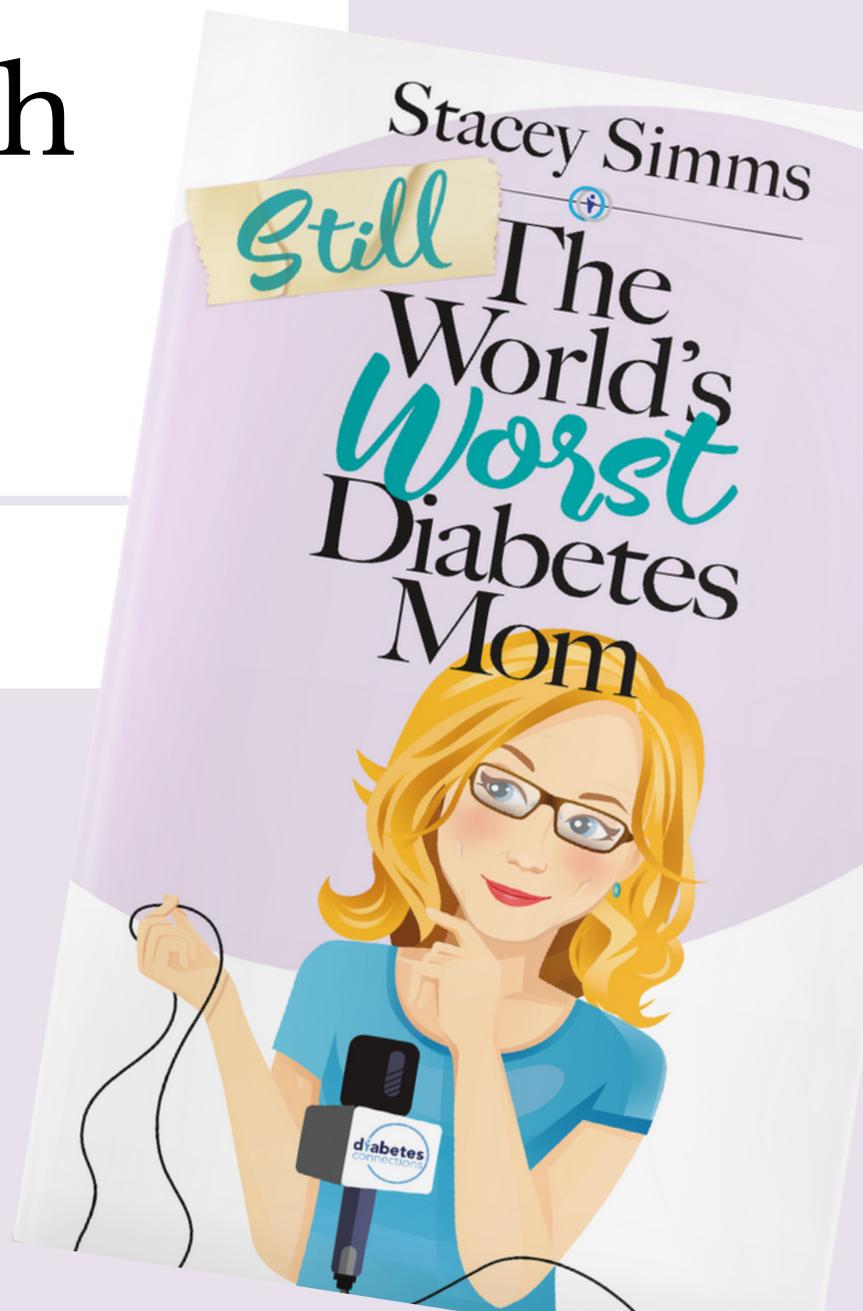


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Tips for Travel with Diabetes





HELLO!

I'm Stacey Simms and my journey with type 1 diabetes began almost 16 years ago when my son was diagnosed just before his second birthday. I know how much there is to learn and I'm here to help families navigating the uncertainty. I want you to know you are not alone!

As a broadcaster with more than 20 years in local TV and radio, I share information and inspiration about type 1 on my blog and podcast, [Diabetes Connections](#). I speak with people from all walks of life: health care providers, tech developers, dietitians, athletes, artists and more! This year, I've added an additional weekly news round-up. It's less than ten minutes that will get you caught up on what's making headlines in the diabetes community.

My family has been very lucky to take some memorable trips and, especially when the kids were younger, it felt like we were always jumping in the car to visit family or friends. Taking diabetes along for the ride is never easy, but with a little extra planning, some flexibility and a lot of humor, we've made incredible memories. I feel like my son can just as easily be low or high at home, so why not travel?

Let's go see the world!

StaceySimms

The World's Worst Diabetes Mom

Diabetes means more planning, packing, and patience for almost every trip. Whether you're an adult with diabetes traveling solo, or a parent of a child with T1D trying to make family memories, what we've learned along the way can help:

- 1. If you're flying, standard advice is to remove your pump or CGM** before going through the full-body scanner and to avoid sending devices through the x-ray machine. You can request a hand inspection and pat down if preferred. Full disclosure: for years my son has put his pump and all his diabetes supplies in the x-ray machine with the carry-on luggage. We've never had an issue. However, the manufacturers can't recommend this (and I can't either) because these devices haven't been tested/FDA approved for those conditions. You can ask for a supervisor if you have issues at security or request help ahead of time by calling [TSA Cares](tel:1-855-787-2227) at 1-855-787-2227
- 2. You are allowed to carry your medical supplies** on your flight, including needles, insulin, the works. [TSA guidelines say](#) you are also allowed to bring emergency juice and liquids, even if greater than 3 ounces. We've found, however, that many TSA agents don't know this and will pull any liquid from carry-ons. For us, it wasn't worth the hassle and now we simply carry gummies or glucose tabs. We also carry an empty water bottle through security and fill it up once we're in the airport.
- 3. If flying with children, consider some play-acting** so they know a little bit of what to expect at the airport. What happens if a TSA agent stops your family and wants to go through the bags or wand the kids? Or if they aren't familiar with diabetes devices and want your child to remove them? Practice a little bit of how you'd react and what you'd like your child to do. This can help them feel less frightened in new circumstances and it may help you stay calm in what can easily become a stressful situation.

4. **Never put all of your diabetes supplies in your checked luggage.** If you're going on a longer trip, you can split supplies into your checked and carry-on baggage but be careful about temperature. You always want the insulin to stay with you. Many airlines will let you carry an additional medical bag as a carry-on. If that's the case, print out the policy; sometimes staff at the gate is not aware.
5. **If you're driving,** keep at least some diabetes supplies inside the car, not packed away in the trunk. We always seem to need a new infusion set or a pump cartridge refill just when we get stuck in traffic. Keeping the diabetes bag nearby in the car also helps keep it more temperature controlled.
6. **In hotels, always test the refrigerator;** they are notorious for freezing insulin. If you're staying multiple nights, you can put a small cup of water in the fridge the first night. If not, keep extra insulin cool using ice packs or, worst case, ice from the hotel's machine. Remember, insulin is good out of the fridge for at least 28 days at room temp. Frozen insulin can't be defrosted and used again, you must toss it.
7. **Make sure people know you have diabetes.** The easiest way to do this is to wear a medical ID bracelet or tags. Bring along emergency contact information and make sure the people you're traveling with know where to find it. Keeping it on your phone is handy but send it to at least one person who's with you, just in case! Have a quick conversation about what kind of support you might need. At the very least, educate your companions about emergency lows and glucagon.

8. **Talk to your health care team.** They know you and/or your child and can recommend specific dosing changes for travel, help you navigate time zone changes, and a lot more. Our endo also put our minds at ease about refills on the road and transferring prescriptions if needed. You can get a note from your doctor explaining that you or your child has diabetes. No one has ever asked to see our note, but I assume as soon as I get rid of it, someone will ask!
9. **Look into your insurance** to see if you're covered for the trip you're taking, especially if traveling out of the country. You may want to buy additional travel insurance if needed, with coverage for pre-existing conditions.
10. **Be kind to yourself and enjoy!** You've got to expect the unexpected with your diabetes management away from home. Anything and everything can impact blood sugar: sitting on a plane or in a car for hours, more activity once you get to your destination, weird food, and unusual-to-you climates. To say nothing of time zone changes and excitement/anxiety. Let go of perfection as a goal and enjoy your trip!

One more! Your printable packing list is on the next page...

What works for you? Let me know!
Drop me a line at stacey@diabetes-connections.com.

Packing List



take at least 2x as much as what you'd normally use

Medication

- Fast acting insulin
- Long acting insulin
- Syringes or pen needles
- Emergency Glucagon
- Any other OTC or prescription medications

include prescription labels

Testing Supplies

- Glucose meter
- Test strips
- Lancer/lancets
- Ketone meter & strips
- or Ketone stix
- Alcohol wipes

CGM/Pump

- CGM sensors/inserters
- CGM transmitter (backup)
- Pump infusion sets or Pods
- Cartridges/reservoirs
- Overlays or adhesives
- Adhesive barrier wipes (Skin-Tac, IV prep, etc)

Other

- Low supplies (glucose tabs, gummies)
- Batteries
- Portable charger
- Charging cable/cords
- Backup CGM receiver
- Backup pump controller
- Flashlight



ABOUT STACEY

Stacey Simms serves the diabetes community with the award-winning news and information show, Diabetes Connections. Think NPR's "Fresh Air" but for people who use insulin. After her son was diagnosed with type 1 in 2006, one month before he turned two, Stacey started blogging about her family's experience. She launched the podcast in 2015 and is closing in on two million downloads. Stacey's books "The World's Worst Diabetes Mom" and "Still the World's Worst Diabetes Mom" are memoirs of her parenting philosophy of "not perfect, but safe and happy." Stacey was named Diabetes Forecast Magazine's "12 People to Know" and honored as one of the Forty under 40 by the Charlotte Business Journal. She lives near Charlotte, NC with her husband, two children and Freckles the dog.

LET'S CONNECT!



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