

21 Tips for Traveling with Diabetes

Don't let good diabetes management go on vacation just because you did. Traveling to new places gets you out of your routine—that's a big part of the fun. But delayed meals, unfamiliar food, being more active than usual, and different time zones can all disrupt diabetes management. Plan so you can count on more fun and less worry on the way and when you get to your destination.

Before You Go

1. Visit your doctor for a checkup to ensure you're fit for the trip. Make sure to ask your doctor:
 - ♦ How your planned activities could affect your diabetes and what to do about it.
 - ♦ How to adjust your insulin doses if you're traveling to a different time zone.
 - ♦ To provide prescriptions for your medicines in case you lose them or run out.
 - ♦ If you'll need any vaccines.
 - ♦ To write a letter stating that you have diabetes and why you need your medical supplies.
2. Just in case, locate pharmacies and clinics close to where you're staying.
3. Get a medical ID bracelet that states you have diabetes and any other health conditions.



4. Get travel insurance in case you miss your flight or need medical care.
5. Order a special meal for the flight that fits with your meal plan or pack your own.
6. Packing:
 - ♦ Put your diabetes supplies in a carry-on bag (insulin could get too cold in your checked luggage). Think about bringing a smaller bag to have at your seat for insulin, glucose tablets, and snacks.
 - ♦ Pack twice as much medicine as you think you'll need. Carry medicines in the pharmacy bottles they came in, or ask your pharmacist to print out extra labels you can attach to plastic bags.
 - ♦ Be sure to pack healthy snacks, like fruit, raw



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Mission

To provide a comprehensive and coordinated system of services designed to promote the independence and dignity of older persons and their families in Muskegon, Oceana, and Ottawa—a mission compelling us to target older persons in greatest need but to advocate for all.



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veggies, and nuts.

7. Airport security:

- ◆ Get an optional TSA notification card to help the screening process go more quickly and smoothly.
- ◆ Good news: people with diabetes are exempt from the 3.4 oz. liquid rule for medicines, fast-acting carbs like juice, and gel packs to keep insulin cool.
- ◆ A continuous glucose monitor or insulin pump could be damaged going through the X-ray machine. You don't have to disconnect from either; ask for a hand inspection instead.

8. Visit CDC's Travelers' Health site for more helpful resources.

While You're Traveling

9. If you're driving, pack a cooler with healthy foods and plenty of water to drink.

10. Don't store insulin or diabetes medicine in direct sunlight or in a hot car; keep them in the cooler too. Don't put insulin directly on ice or a gel pack.

11. Heat can also damage your blood sugar monitor, insulin pump, and other diabetes equipment. Don't leave them in a hot car, by a pool, in direct sunlight, or on the beach. The same goes for supplies such as test strips.

12. You can find healthy food options at the airport or a roadside restaurant:

- ◆ Fruit, nuts, sandwiches, yogurt
- ◆ Salads with chicken or fish (skip the dried fruit and croutons)
- ◆ Eggs and omelets
- ◆ Burgers with a lettuce wrap instead of a bun
- ◆ Fajitas (skip the tortillas and rice)

13. Stop and get out of the car or walk up and down the aisle of the plane or train every hour or two to prevent blood clots

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(people with diabetes are at higher risk).

14. Set an alarm on your phone for taking medicine if you're traveling across time zones.

Once You're There

15. Your blood sugar may be out of your target range at first, but your body should adjust in a few days. Check your blood sugar often and treat highs or lows as instructed by your doctor or diabetes educator.

16. If you're going to be more active than usual, check your blood sugar before and after and adjust food, activity, and insulin as needed.

17. Food is a huge highlight (and temptation!) on a cruise. Avoid the giant buffet, and instead order off the spa menu (healthier choices) or low-carb menu (most ships have one) or order something tasty that fits in your meal plan from the 24-hour room service.

18. Don't overdo physical activity during the heat of the day. Avoid getting a sunburn and don't go barefoot, not even on the beach.

19. High temperatures can change how your body uses insulin. You may need to test your blood sugar more often and adjust your insulin dose and what you eat and drink.

20. You may not be able to find everything you need to manage your diabetes away from home, especially in another country. Learn some useful phrases, such as "I have diabetes" and "where is the nearest pharmacy?"

21. If your vacation is in the great outdoors, bring wet wipes so you can clean your hands before you check your blood sugar.

Making Memories

Diabetes can make everyday life and travel more challenging, but it doesn't have to keep you close to home. The more you plan, the more you'll be able to relax and enjoy all the exciting experiences of your trip.

Source: Centers for Disease Control



Quotes

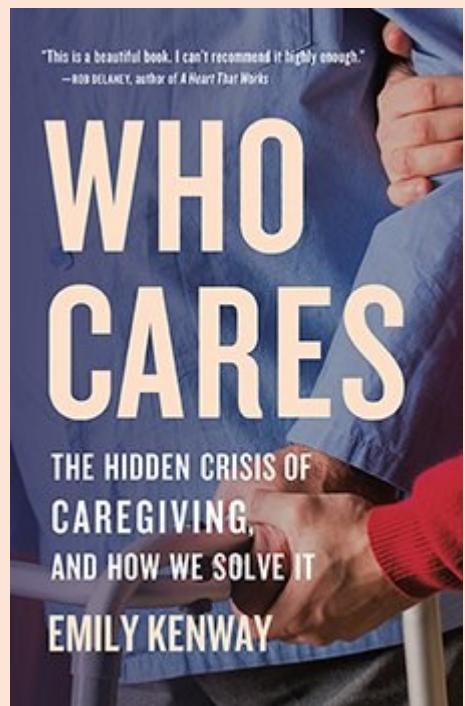
- ♦ FALL in love with Halloween
- ♦ Halloween is a real treat
- ♦ *Halloween is an opportunity to be really creative.*

October's website

www.thecaregiversvoice.com

This Month's Book

When Emily Kenway became the primary caregiver for her terminally ill mother, her life was changed forever. Millions of caregivers all around the world are silently suffering from poverty, isolation, and burnout.



After Caregiving: Picking Up the Pieces

by Brenda Race

As a caregiver, we totally commit ourselves to caring for another person who no longer functions as they once did in the normal scheme of life. We move in with them or move them to us. We give up our jobs, our own independence, and very often our family and friends. We become so involved with the care of that person out of love that we ourselves are removed from normal day-to-day living. Our entire life revolves around comforting and making our loved one feel loved. We protect them at all costs. In a very real sense, we have given our life for another.... not out of obligation but out of LOVE! The ultimate test of LOVE for another.

Then one day we wake up and our commitment has been released to a far greater LOVE in a place of no more pain or suffering. We grieve and then the process of finding our way back into the world begins anew.

How do we pick up the pieces and start to live again? I guess there is no so-called normal pattern

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The Interesting Origins of Halloween

By Micaela Bahn

What is the real story behind Halloween?

The origins of Halloween date all the way back to the Celts of ancient Ireland, who celebrated the new year on November 1. That day marked the transition from the warm, fruitful summer months to the cold and dark winter, a period that was most often associated with death. So, on October 31, the night before the new year, they celebrated what was known as (cue the spooky voice) *Samhain*. It was a night when the boundary between the living world and the world of the dead became thin, and ghosts could return to walk the earth. Or so they believed.

These meddlesome ghosts damaged crops and caused trouble, but the blurred line to the spirit world also made it easier for Celtic priests to make predictions about the coming year.



How did Halloween traditions start and why?

Those same prophecy-speaking priests commemorated the night by building huge bonfires that became the hub for evening activities. People gathered around in costume to disguise themselves from ghosts, tried to tell each other's fortunes, enjoyed a big feast, and made lanterns out of gourds (sound familiar?). Here's another bit of info: those big bonfires attracted insects, which then attracted bats. That's why the flying critters are now associated with the holiday.

These pagan traditions continued until Christianity extended its influence into the Celtic lands, and the celebration became generally toned down. The name "Halloween" came from the Christian All Souls' Day celebration, also known as "All-hallows." And since All-hallows was on November 1, folks began to call *Samhain* "All Hallows Eve."

Now, what about some of the other Halloween traditions we know and love? When it comes to bobbing for apples, we can possibly attribute their introduction to early Roman conquests and the Romans' own fall holiday which was symbolized by an apple. As for black cats, the idea of being spooked by the felines has roots in the Middle Ages. Back then, many believed that witches avoided detection by turning themselves into black cats. Then there's the traditional Halloween colors of black and orange. This theme once again dates to the Celtic festival of Samhain. For the Celts, black symbolized the "death" of summer while

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orange represented the harvest season.

How did Halloween become an American holiday?

The Halloween that we know today is a result of the great American immigrant melting pot. Our distinctly American version began with public events to celebrate the harvest. Neighbors would gather at these "play parties" to share stories of the dead—also known as ghost stories—and enjoy some mischief-making. Still, it was not until a large wave of Irish immigrants came over during the 19th century that the holiday became widely celebrated across the country.

Wondering how trick-or-treating came about? Well, there's several theories about that. One idea is that the custom came from Ireland where young people once took part in a tradition called guising where they would dress in costume then sing, tell a joke or perform another sort of "trick" before collecting a treat of fruit, nuts or coins. There's also the act of souling, which traces back to 15th century Christians who would go door-to-door asking for treats or "soul cakes." They would take these pastries in exchange for a promise to pray for the souls of those homeowners' dead relatives. Later, Ameri-



can children took a note out of the European book and began going door-to-door asking for treats.

As the more serious, life-or-death parts of the Celtic traditions began to fade,

new lighthearted variations emerged: Fortune-telling, for example, turned into bobbing for apples in which women could find out which suitor (the apple) she would eventually "bite into" (as in, marry). Young Irish and Scottish kids helped bring about the tradition of costumes: The pranksters went from dressing up as priests to putting together scary creatures intended to spook the neighborhood.

Eventually, the games, mischief-making, and hunt for sweets all melded together into trick-or-treating, and the whole thing became more about community than anything else. By the time the 20th century rolled around, it was an essentially secular holiday centered on neighborhood get-togethers and parties.

Today Americans *still* love Halloween and put modern twists on their celebrations. You can find the most haunted states and visit their haunted houses or a corn maze, or even order your state's most popular candy to leave at your door.

that each of us must follow. It seems to come down to taking one step at a time...some walk slower than others and some speed their way back out into the world! Often, we take one step forward and two backwards ... it is not an easy process but there is life after caregiving! We just must look forward and find opportunities that are once again there for us.

Renew old friendships, find a job that you feel good doing, do volunteer work (we already know you are a caring concerned person!), find a new or renew an old hobby.... but begin to take a few small steps towards living again! One of the best therapies is finding a friend you can talk to...one who will listen and support you as you ease back into the world! Soon you will find that life does still exist, and you are a part of it! Butterflies are still flying, and the birds are still singing. The light of another day is showing through the clouds, and all that you gave up was well worth it in the end.

We are better than ever for our commitment. We are forever changed in a good way.... No one can ever take that total love away from us as we again join the world.

Keeping Yourself #1

by Michele Lewane, JD

For many Americans, providing care for someone with an illness, injury or disability is a job — either paid or unpaid. Millions of Americans work in the caregiving field, in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and in private homes. Millions more help their loved ones if they require assistance. According to the National Alliance for Caregiving, nearly 66 million Americans serve as family caregivers for an ill or disabled relative. On average, family caregivers provide 39.2 hours of care a week, which is roughly the equivalent of a full-time job.

Caregiving can be incredibly rewarding, both professionally and personally. Helping a person with their activities of daily living and ensuring that they can manage their lives successfully is satisfying — but it is also challenging. Providing care to a person with an illness, injury or disability can be emotionally and physically taxing, leading to caregiver stress. Because it can impact your ability to take care of others, managing this stress is vital. As a caregiver, self-care is incredibly important if you are to continue in your role.

What Is Caregiver Stress?

Caregiver stress is a condition that is often found in anyone — paid or unpaid — who is taking care of someone who is ill, injured or disabled. It is related to the emotional and physical strain of providing care, which often involves being "on call" all day. It arises from the overwhelming duty of taking care of a person who is disabled, ill, or injured. Caregiver stress may be compounded for family members as they experience grief due to the decline of their loved one. Caregivers who work with individuals with behavioral difficulties, such as memory issues, aggression and wandering, may suffer from even greater levels of caregiver stress.

Caregiver stress is associated with depression and anxiety, with 40 to 70% of caregivers reporting symptoms of depression. It may also lead to high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, and heart disease, particularly for women who are taking care of their spouse. Prioritizing the needs of another can often lead to caregivers neglecting their own health, from skipping doctor's appointments to failing to eat right and get exercise.

Why Putting Yourself First Sometimes Is Critical

If you are a caregiver, you may be a person's primary support

**Remember
to take care of
yourself. Sometimes
you get so busy taking
care of others that
you forget that
you are important
too.**

Lessons Taught
By LIFE

system. The equation is simple: if you fall ill because you are not taking care of yourself properly, then that person will not have anyone to take care of him or her.

There is a saying that is employed frequently in these circumstances that bears repeating: just like on a plane, you must put your own oxygen mask on first before you can assist others. It may be a cliché, but it is used frequently for a reason — it is true.

Caregiver stress is not a made-up syndrome, or an excuse to be selfish. It is a real phenomenon that impacts people in situations just like yours. If you are taking care of someone, you know how difficult the day-to-day grind can be, from dealing with the emotions of your loved one to handling the challenges of medical appointments and the need to be ready for the unexpected. It wears on a person, both mentally and physically. Taking care of yourself is necessary so that you can continue to function and keep being there — strong and determined.

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How Caregivers Can Prioritize Their Health and Well-being

There are any number of ways that you can engage in self-care throughout the day. By taking care of yourself in ways both big and small, you will be able to take care of your loved one even better.

First, there are things that you should be doing routinely to help fortify yourself to handle the daily stresses that life as a caregiver will throw your way. Start by getting a good night of sleep, aiming for seven to eight hours every night. While it may be tempting to stay up late for some alone time, remember that your days will be long — and getting sleep should be your priority. Next, make sure that you eat well-balanced meals and drink plenty of water. It may be easier to eat junk food or guzzle soda as you focus on the needs of your loved one. But taking the time to eat fruits and vegetables and stay hydrated will help you feel better...and may help you avoid sickness. Finally, you should exercise every single day, even if it is just to do 15 minutes of stretching or a short walk. As a bonus, attempt to get outside during your exercise; you'll find that the fresh air revives you and helps you stay focused.

Second, you should take the time to care for your physical and mental health needs on a regular basis. Schedule and attend medical appointments and attend to your own aches and pains. When you are taking care of someone with a chronic illness or disability, you may tend to downplay your own health needs. But it is important to address your medical concerns as they arise — to keep yourself healthy and so that you can be there for your loved one. You should also consider scheduling therapy or counseling sessions. Caregiving is difficult, emotionally drain-

ing work. Having a neutral third party to talk about your feelings with can be invaluable. Support groups may also be available in your area for caretakers. Alternatively, spend time with friends or family members, and allow yourself to vent. It is OK to have com-



plicated emotions about your role as a caretaker — and to express them. Another way that you may be able to seek release from this stress is through other forms of relaxation, such as massage, yoga, meditation, prayer, or even reading.

Third, consider your overall needs. What makes you happy? Think about what you enjoy — and find a way to do it. Ask for help, from friends, family, or religious support groups. Local agencies or social workers may be able to provide resources to give you a respite. This can give you the opportunity to pursue the things in life that give you joy, such as painting, spending time with friends, golfing, or any other activity. The key is to ask for help, rather than waiting for others to guess that you might need assistance. While caregiver stress is common, it isn't unavoidable. By putting yourself first sometimes, you can avoid some of the pitfalls associated with caring for an injured, ill, or disabled individual. In the long run, both you and your loved one will be better off if you focus on yourself sometimes — which is a win-win for everyone.

Important Updates:

The editors of the Caregiver Link are seeking to update the mailing list.

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Starting with the November/December 2024 issue, the Caregiver Link will become a bi-monthly publication. The publication schedule is as follows:

New Publication Schedule:

November/December • January/February • March/April • May/June • July/August • September/October

Access Online: Remember, you can always access the Caregiver Link at <https://seniorresourceswmi.org/caregivers/>

Thank you for your continued support!

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