

Travelling with a lung condition

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Faith Franz of The Mesothelioma Center is an advocate for alternative medicine. She encourages patients to explore all of the treatment options that could potentially save their life. To keep current on the most up-to-date mesothelioma cancer information, visit the [Mesothelioma News Center](#).

Patients with lung cancer, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), emphysema, mesothelioma or any other illness of the lungs or respiratory tract often need to make special travel accommodations. From traveling with oxygen tanks to transporting medications, they have several special requirements they must address.

Making these arrangements can be time consuming, but with foresight, patience and diligence, patients with chronic lung conditions can ensure a smooth and easy travel experience. The following tips can help streamline the process.

General tips

- Get your doctor's approval. Be sure to check with your doctor before making any travel arrangements. Most patients are cleared to leave town for vacation, but it's necessary to get your doctor's approval.
- Start planning several weeks in advance. This helps you avoid stressful last-minute situations. It also allows you enough time to contact your pharmacy to refill prescriptions or obtain any necessary medical documents from your physician.
- Make detailed packing lists. Include medical equipment, daily prescriptions, emergency medications and a list of contacts for your medical care providers. Double check your bag after packing to make sure you have all of your essentials.
- Find comfort aids. Traveling will likely require you to remain in a seated position for an extended period of time. If it is difficult for you to find a comfortable seated position, you may wish to secure pillows, braces, supports or similar items before you leave.
- Keep medications easily accessible. If you are checking luggage with an airline, bus company or train company, be sure to pack any medications you will need during travel in a carry-on bag. This includes pain medications and inhalers. If you need to take these medications with food or liquid, be sure to keep those accessible as well.
- If you are driving, consider a travel partner to share the responsibilities. If you experience a severe coughing fit, a sudden onset of fatigue or any other similar condition, it is helpful to have another driver to take the wheel. If you are driving and experience a sudden onset of symptoms that could potentially endanger yourself or your passengers, do not hesitate to pull over.

Preparing for a vacation is often a fun and exciting process. Unfortunately, for those with a chronic lung condition, it can be a major source of stress.




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For patients flying with oxygen

- Contact potential airlines before you book your tickets. Some, but not all, airlines allow patients to travel with portable oxygen concentrators. However, all airlines must provide an alternate source for you to use, but they may charge you for the service. Find out your airline's policy before you arrive at the airport. [The European Lung Foundation](#) has a database of oxygen use policies for European airlines. If you're looking for oxygen equipment at your destination, [Oxytravel](#) coordinates oxygen needs worldwide.
- Ask your doctor if you can temporarily disconnect from the oxygen during airport screening. If you need to stay connected at all times, be prepared to inform a screening officer at the airport. Allot extra time during check-in for alternate passenger screening procedures. If you are planning on alternate screening methods, be prepared for a pat-down procedure.
- Decide how you plan to transport your tank. If you can disconnect from your oxygen tank, you may check it as luggage. Some airlines offer the option of bringing the tank as a carry-on. Choose your transportation method ahead of time to avoid surprise baggage fees or delays.

For patients flying with a nebulizer

- Pack the equipment in a plastic bag. You will be required to remove your nebulizer from its carrying case during screening. You may, however, bring a plastic bag to place it in for sanitary purposes.
- Pack nebulizer fluids in accordance with [Transportation Security Administration](#) or the [Canadian Air Transport Security Authority guidelines](#). 

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