

Travel Tips

Tips Specific to Boomers

Travel in this day and age is confusing at best. I continually get calls from travelers asking what they can and cannot take on a flight, what about medication and so forth. This is the direct link from the TSA that will answer all your travel questions as well as customer service and the TSA Travel Center.

<http://www.tsa.dhs.gov/travelers/index.shtm>

Boomers should review the information contained in the section Planning Your Trip: Learn About the Places You Will Visit, consider the following tips, and discuss the trip with a physician:

- Local conditions: Be aware of any effects the local topography or climate may have on you: If you are sensitive to altitude or to humidity, or to other attributes of your destination, consult with your physician.

 - Lithium Batteries: Passengers will no longer be able to pack loose lithium batteries in checked luggage beginning Jan. 1, 2008 once new federal safety rules take effect. The new regulation, designed to reduce the risk of lithium battery fires, will continue to allow lithium batteries in checked baggage if they are installed in electronic devices, or in carry-on baggage if stored in plastic bags. Common consumer electronics such as travel cameras, cell phones, and most laptop computers are still allowed in carry-on and checked luggage. However, the rule limits individuals to bringing only two extended-life spare rechargeable lithium batteries, such as laptop and professional audio/video/camera equipment lithium batteries in carry-on baggage. For more details, visit <http://safetravel.dot.gov>.

 - Don't over-program: The additional physical activity undertaken during travel can be quite strenuous, and sudden changes in diet and climate can have serious health consequences for the unprepared traveler.

 - Pack wisely: Don't pack so much that you will end up lugging around heavy suitcases. Dress conservatively—a wardrobe that is flashy may attract the attention of thieves or con artists, while clothing that is very casual may result in being barred from some tourist sites overseas. Include a change of clothing in your carry-on luggage.
- Traveling With Disabilities Individual countries have their own standards of accessibility for disabled travelers. Some countries have nondiscrimination laws that help to protect travelers with disabilities, while other countries do not. Preparation before you go can help ensure that your planned destination will be accessible, safe and enjoyable. Travelers with disabilities should review the Department of Transportation pamphlets New Horizons for the Air Traveler with a Disability and Plane Talk: Facts for Passengers With Disabilities. Both of these publications are available at the Department of Transportation's website <http://www.dot.gov>. In addition, travelers with disabilities should review the information contained in the section above entitled Planning Your Trip: Learn About the Places You Will Visit, consider the following tips, and discuss the trip with a physician:
- Research in advance: Learn about planned stops and ask questions about services available. Consider the level of health care available, as well as local transportation needs to and from the airport, luggage assistance, and whether other help will be needed to leave the airport terminal. When making reservations, inform the travel agent or carrier of your disability and the equipment you use, and, if necessary, request a wheelchair be brought to the gate upon arrival and any other assistance needed while flying and at the airport. In all cases, ask that your needs and requests be documented as part of the reservation, and take down the name of the agent. That way, if there is a problem, you may be able to quickly show that you are entitled to the service you requested.

 - Seek medical advice: Talk to your physician about the activities you have planned and your general physical condition, any immunizations that might be needed, and medications, whether prescription or over the counter, that you might need for your trip. Carry a letter from your attending physician, describing your medical condition and any prescription medications, including the generic names of prescribed drugs.

 - Your medications: If you take prescription medication, make sure you have enough to last the duration of the trip, including extra medicine in case you are delayed. Pack your medication in your carry-on bag, since checked baggage is occasionally lost. Always carry your prescriptions in their labeled containers, not in a pill pack.

 - Documentation of immunizations: Take with you proper documentation of immunizations.

- Health and Evacuation Insurance: Make sure you have adequate health insurance coverage while abroad, including coverage of medical evacuation (not covered by most domestic policies). Note that U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

- Service dogs: Some countries have restrictions on service dogs. If you intend to travel with a service dog, be sure to check on possible restrictions with the embassy or consulate of each country you will visit. (This and other country information may be found on each country's Consular Information Sheet at <http://travel.state.gov>). If service dogs are permitted, learn about quarantine or vaccination requirements. Find out what documents are needed, including international health certificates and rabies inoculation certificates, and if the documents need to be translated. Talk with your vet about tips for traveling with a dog, and how travel will affect the animal. You may also want to ensure that hotels will accommodate your service dog, and that there will be an adequate area for the dog to relieve itself.

- Maintenance on equipment: Have a maintenance check done on any equipment you will take with you, to ensure that everything is in working order before you leave. You may want to research the availability of wheelchair and medical equipment providers in the areas you plan to visit.

- Carry written plans: Carry with you your written itinerary and directions of where you wish to go. These can be shown to people who might be able to help you if you are lost. Another useful tool is a point-and-conversation guide.