

TRAVEL HEALTH UPDATE

Putting Medications On Your Packing List

(NAPSA)—Here's a healthy reminder: The next time you travel, don't forget to pack your prescription drugs.

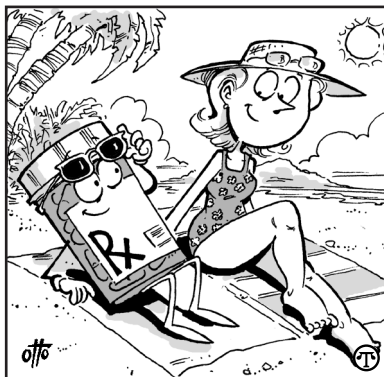
How To Travel With Drugs

The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy says the safest way to travel with medications is to keep them in their original containers, but that's not always practical, especially for short trips. You don't want to take along several bottles of 30 or more capsules for a four-day weekend. Judy Cahill, the Academy's executive director, advises, "Take along just enough to last through the entire trip, with perhaps two or three extra days' supply in case of travel delays or trip extensions." And keep them with you—don't take a chance on checked luggage.

The next best thing to do is to place your medications in a pill carrier; many types are readily available in any drugstore. In addition, write down all the medications you are taking on a sheet of paper, including the medication's name, the doctor's name and phone number, how much to take and when to take it. If there's any chance of confusion, include a description of the colors, shapes and sizes.

Your Pharmacist Can Help

Many pharmacies have these records and would be happy to provide you with a copy. Often, when you pick up your drugs at the pharmacy, you can get a duplicate label. Peel it off the backing and put it on a sheet of paper with all your other medications and keep this list in a safe place. Make sure the doctor's name and phone



If you take medication regularly, don't forget to pack it whenever you travel.

number are included for each medication. When you travel, bring along a photocopy of the list. If you're worried about mixing up your medications, make a copy of each label and put the copy in a secure plastic bag or container with the medications.

Your Health Insurer Can, Too

If you have prescription insurance, you can ask the plan to send you this information or help you access your records on its Web site. If you get drugs at more than one pharmacy or clinic, your insurance plan will probably have the most complete records. Be sure to pack your prescription I.D. card, too, and keep a copy of both the front and the back of the card in a separate place.

With this information, you'll be able to easily replace any medications you may need and, if you fall ill unexpectedly, you can easily communicate which drugs you are taking to a pharmacist or doctor. Your plan should be able to help

you manage this process if you call the customer service number.

Who Needs It?

It's important to do this for all family members, from toddlers to seniors, because you never know who might fall ill or become injured and unable to communicate.

Further Precautions

If you take drugs that might react with other drugs or foods or if you have a serious medical condition that might leave you unconscious, talk to your doctor about a bracelet or pendant with that information and keep your medical information in an easy-to-find spot, such as a purse, pocket or wallet.

If you're taking a trip of more than a month, you may need to bring along an extra supply or refill your prescriptions where you'll be staying. Call your insurance plan and ask whether you can get additional medication for the length of your stay, or whether it has a pharmacy network in that location. It's a good idea to bring a photocopy of your records for the temporary pharmacy. Some have the ability to obtain your records electronically, for even greater safety and convenience. If your plan does have a pharmacy in the temporary location, don't forget to bring your prescription card, so your medications can be paid for just like at home. If not, keep all of your receipts so you can be repaid.

Learn More

You can learn more about medication at the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy Web site: www.amcp.org.