





*This booklet has been produced
in collaboration with*





Going On Vacation Travel Advice For Ostomates


This Booklet **Going on Vacation – Travel Advice for Ostomates** has been written by the Ostomy Association of Ireland in collaboration with  **ConvaTec** who are one of the world leaders in Ostomy Care and the production of Ostomy products for Ostomates worldwide.


 **ConvaTec** are proud to be Social Corporate Partnership Sponsors of the OAI and delighted to have worked together in collaboration with the OAI to produce this booklet which gives Ostomates living in Ireland useful information that they may need, especially when travelling outside of Ireland to European destinations, USA, Canada and Australia as well as many other exotic faraway places in the sun.


Holidaying at home in Ireland is not as challenging as travelling to other destinations outside of Ireland. For Ostomates the first journey outside of your home even if only a short journey to visit family or friends for many Ostomates was a nervous experience. However, most Ostomates after that first journey get more courageous and gradually venture further from home and spend a night away in a hotel or with family and friends. Many Ostomates think nothing now of being in a plane for 8hrs or more and enjoy their journey with little if any anxiety about travelling. For many Ostomates their greatest anxiety is often experienced at airports when going through security screening and checking of contents in their hand luggage. Every effort has been made to give accurate advice to Ostomates that will make their journey when travelling by air a pleasant flying experience. Dublin Airport following discussions with the OAI sponsored a small ID sized Medical Travel Card which should be helpful together with the Travel Certificate which provides basic medical information on Ostomates in 16 different languages.

 **ConvaTec** share with the OAI their primary objective to develop a **Partnership of Service** which involves Ostomy Companies and Medical Professionals working together to empower Ostomates to enjoy an improved **Quality of Life** and to be able to **Live Life to the Full** with a Stoma or Internal Pouch. Going on a Vacation is one of the most satisfying experiences in life a Ostomate can enjoy which enriches their Quality of Life so that they can enjoy Life to the Full.

 **ConvaTec** worldwide are proud to support the Stoma Community and believe everyone should be able to lead a full and active life – and it is our mission to empower you to be able to do so.

 **ConvaTec** Ireland Team led by Caroline Cord, Ostomy Services Lead and her Colleagues Darina Jennings and Paula Kennedy endeavour to provide a quality service which meets the needs of Ostomates in Ireland.

 **ConvaTec** in being Proud Sponsors of this booklet wish all Ostomates who are planning a vacation a most enjoyable holiday.

The Ostomy Association of Ireland wish to acknowledge the collaborative support we received from  **ConvaTec** in producing this booklet and thank them for sponsoring this publication and hope we have more opportunities in the future to collaborate again together.

Planning your Holiday

For some people with a stoma they have a plan for each and every time they leave their home. That could be going to work, a day out shopping or a social evening out. Having everything they need for a stoma pouch change (or clothing) is necessary. The thoughts of travelling in a Car, Taxi, Bus, Train, Aeroplane or Boat are for many Ostomates an impossible dream. In the early days after surgery, it makes sense to start with short trips away from home while you build up confidence again.

There is no reason why you cannot jet off to the opposite side of the world : head for warmer (or colder) climates on a cruise, take a car, bus or train to tour around Ireland or to another European country. It is understandable that Ostomates who have recently had Stoma or Internal Pouch surgery associate even some short journeys with a great amount of anxiety. By simply being aware of potential issues before your start to contemplate your holiday you can certainly alleviate, or in most cases, dispel the stress completely.

Travelling Abroad

If you are planning your first trip abroad and have had surgery in the last six weeks, check with your surgeon or GP prior to booking in order to make sure you are able to travel. Also, seek medical approval if you have been in hospital during the last six months.



Supplies

Your comfort in travelling is most important, so you need to make preparations both for travelling and for when you reach your destination. Remember in hot climates your skin will perspire. You might also like to go swimming. Likewise, your diet may change and so you may need to change your pouch more often than usual.

- Order extra quantity of your usual supplies. It is advisable to take between one and a half to two times your normal limit.
- It is useful to take a roll of small pedal bin liners (as well as the disposal bags supplied with your appliances) for use in your hotel room. When securely tied they will enable you to discreetly dispose of your appliance disposal bags.
- If you are advised against drinking local water, and if you normally irrigate your Colostomy, you will need to use still bottled water.
- If you have a Colostomy it is recommended you take some drainable pouches with you as well, just in case you suffer from an upset stomach.
- If you have a Urostomy consider bringing a folding night drainage bag stand with you, it may well be a very useful thing to bring with you.

How to help yourself

- Watch what you eat, especially the day before you travel. You know yourself the types of food that cause you problems so be careful to avoid these before travelling. Try to avoid skipping meals too, as this can cause excess wind and fluid.
- If your stoma is in an awkward position consider buying a protector to prevent your pouch from getting trapped or rubbed by the safety belt in a plane or on a coach. On longer journeys you can be strapped for a while if there is a lot of turbulence on your flight.
- If you are flying, it is advisable to check in as early as you can. This way you can request an aisle seat near to the toilet. You may even be able to reserve this seat at the time of booking.
- It is advisable to wear comfortable loose fitting comfortable clothes. Particularly on a long air journey cabin pressure can cause swelling of your feet, ankles and waistline. It is most important to drink plenty of water and walk about when you are able to.
- Avoid ice in drinks unless the cubes are made from bottled water. Watch out with salads too, as these may have been washed in tap water. For similar reasons, it is also recommended best to avoid ice cream.

Bon Voyage

Leaks

Nobody wants to have a problem with a leak, but they do occur. Some Ostomy companies provide complimentary disposable bed pads, which you might want to consider taking with you.

Fluids

Fluids are very important. In hot countries you lose fluids through perspiration. Moderate your intake of alcohol and caffeine drinks as they can lead to dehydration. If you do become dehydrated, sports drinks and rehydration powders are useful to replace lost salts. Avoid drinking very cold water as this remains in your stomach longer and takes longer to be absorbed by the body. It is also advisable to drink bottled water unless you can be sure that the tap water is safe.

Remember

If you irrigate and the quality of the tap water is questionable, make sure you irrigate with bottled water.

Useful Medication

It is a good idea to take an electrolyte replacement solution with you in case you become dehydrated. It is also worth speaking to your stoma nurse, GP or pharmacist prior to travel about medication for firming things up if your stoma output increases or loosening if you become constipated. Depending on where you are planning to go on holiday it is also good to bring some medication tablet or cream to protect you from insect bites.

Hints and Tips when Travelling

Travelling by Road

Travelling by road usually does not cause any problems because there are many roadside service stations that have Toilet facilities if you need them. You are entitled to use disabled toilet facilities and the reverse side of your membership card clearly indicates you are an Ostomate.

If you are travelling in a bus or luxury coach many now have a toilet facility that you can use if you need to and especially so if you are travelling on a long journey it is reassuring that there is a facility.

As with all types of travel, remember to pack a travel bag and avoid leaving it in the car / coach in warm weather to avoid the risk of adhesive melt. If you have an insulated bag it is better if travelling in hot weather to protect your ostomy products. Do not store items in the glove compartment as this heats up considerably.



Try and ensure that your seat belt sits across your hips rather than your abdomen where your stoma usually lies. For extra protection there are low cost cushion devices that slip onto the seat belt. These will make you more comfortable whilst retaining the level of protection you need.

Travelling by Train

Most trains have toilets facilities with the exception of some local trains, Dart trains and Luas. Irish Rail intercity trains have a disabled toilet which allows you some space and comfort if you need to change your pouch. As with all other types of travel remember to bring a travel bag with you and avoid leaving it where it can be easily taken or lost.

Not all trains have a buffet carriage or catering trolley service, so make sure you have plenty of fluids to drink and something to eat – it is really important to remain fully hydrated.



Travelling by Sea

Travelling by boat / ship / cruise liner should not be a problem as there are more than adequate toilets available including disabled toilet.



On cruise liners the facilities usually include medical staff that may be able to help you in an emergency.

As with other types of travel, remember to pack a travel bag and avoid leaving this where it can be easily removed or lost.

Travelling by Air

Planning to travel by air for the first time can be a worry and we imagine all kinds of difficulties may happen e.g.

Q. Will my pouch blow up because of variations in cabin pressure ?

A. NO. Your pouch will behave as normal. However, eating and drinking sensibly will lessen the chance of wind in your pouch.



Q. What if I have to change my pouch while on the plane ?

A. Have everything you need readily accessible during the flight. Some people prefer to wear a drainable pouch which can be drained down the toilet. If you prefer to wear your usual closed pouch it is acceptable to wrap it well and dispose of it in the bin in the toilet cubicle.

When booking your flight check the baggage allowance, for both 'checked' and 'cabin'. If you have both, consider splitting your stoma supplies between each bag. If you are travelling with a family member or friend consider putting some of your stoma supplies in their check in bag in case any of your luggage goes missing. Remember to always keep some of your ostomy appliances in your hand travel bag and the balance in your checked-in luggage. Have your pouches pre-cut or mouldable because scissors can only go in checked-in luggage. Airlines will vary in relation to extra baggage allowance. Depending on each person's circumstances, it is important that at the time of booking you check out the baggage allowance they are offering you. Look for the airline's policy on extra luggage allowance for medical supplies, this might be a subsection of Medical Equipment.

Pack as many ostomy appliances and accessories as you would normally use. There is nothing like feeling safe to help you enjoy your holiday,

Should you be unlucky enough to suffer from diarrhoea and you normally use closed pouches, it might be wise to pack a few drainable versions in case of emergency. Taking an over-the-counter diarrhoea medication at the first sign of trouble will usually stop diarrhoea in its tracks.

It is always tempting prior to flights to miss meals ...do not, it simply knocks your body out of sync. Do drink lots of fluids but avoid alcohol and fizzy drinks because the change in air pressure, whether you have a stoma or not, can often cause wind to be an issue.

When booking your flight, if you are pre-selecting your seat, would an aisle seat suit you better, so if/when you need to go to the toilet you are not disturbing anyone, and you can also see where the nearest toilets are. Before flying it is recommended to empty your drainable pouch in the departure lounge toilet whilst you are waiting to board your plane.

Seat belts must always be worn as requested. They are for your safety but try to position yours above or below your stoma, not across it at all possible.

If you become dehydrated, sports drinks or rehydration powders are useful to replace lost salts from perspiration and diarrhoea. Plan ahead and pack some with your emergency supplies.

Packing your Ostomy Products

It is good to make a list of all Ostomy Products that you need to bring with you when going on holiday. Making a prepared checklist of what you need to bring with you will make packing your suitcase a straightforward operation.

In general it is wise to keep some of your Ostomy supplies together as hand luggage so that you have them within reach at all times; a second more substantial quantity of supplies put in your suitcase; and a small 'Travel Bag' that you can use discreetly at any toilet facility as and when needed.

Some people with an Ileostomy or Urostomy pouch might be prone to anxiety about leakages during the night, Ensuring you have a plastic mattress cover or sheet will prevent the mattress being damaged and give you peace of mind.



Food and Drink

Everyone should be able to go away on holiday and indulge themselves. With an element of planning and being sensible about food and drink, there is absolutely no reason why you should not too.

Remember, always drink plenty of fluids especially if you are holidaying in a hot climate.

Moderate your intake of alcohol and caffeine drinks as they can lead to dehydration. If you do become dehydrated, sports drinks and rehydration powders are useful to replace lost salts.

Always wash your hands before and after meals to minimise the possibility of transferring germs to your system. Always check whether the water is suitable for drinking, if there is any doubt then use bottled water.

Wash all fruit and vegetables with bottled water and be wary of eating salads as these might have been washed with local water. Ice cream, if traditionally made rather than a commercial brand, can often be the cause of tummy upsets. If in doubt, it is better to avoid it.

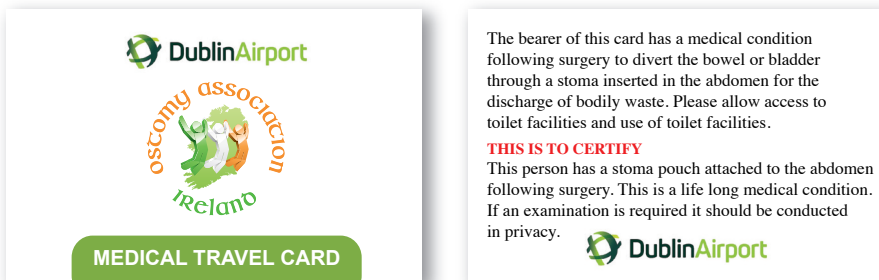
If you follow these tips and with a little forward planning you should have a problem free holiday.

Airport Security and Screening

It is most important to understand that airport security is there to protect us and ensure that we have a pleasant flying experience. Safety standards and security screening checks are a necessary part of reassuring us that we are in a safe travelling environment.

Dublin Airport were very pleased to have worked together with the Ostomy Association of Ireland to create a small ID sized card which allows the bearer to show to security screening officers in order to discreetly make them aware of any additional assistance which may be required by the passenger during the screening process. The Medical Travel Card was launched at Dublin Airport in September 2019.

Members of the Ostomy Association of Ireland also have a membership card which confirms your Name and Address. The reverse side of the card states you have a



medical condition and requests the use of toilet facilities including access to a disabled toilet.

In order to have a pleasant experience when going through the screening process we can make the screening process easier for both the security staff and ourselves



by packing all medical supplies in a manner which is easy to present to security for inspection. It is also important to note that some items (liquids or gels) may require further testing. They will not be opened but will be tested, please allow additional time for completion of this process.

Medical items are separate from the usual cosmetic/toiletries allowance and should be placed in separate transparent bags. Each bag should contain a maximum of 1 litre of liquids/gels/sprays - 100ml size.

Please also remove all items from your person (belts, loose change from pockets) and any other item likely to activate the security scanner. If you are required to have additional screening you can ask to move to a more discreet area.

The OCS meet and assist service is available should a passenger require it (a care agent would be assigned to meet you and provide a walk through assisting with security and on to the boarding gate. DAA (Dublin Airport Authority) aims to offer assistance to any passenger that requires it. They include 'hidden disability' in their policy. OCS (One Complete Solution) is contracted by the DAA to carry out the assistance policy. If you make your request directly with DAA or OCS, any assistance offered will only relate to Dublin Airport. This service should be booked 48 hours in advance if required.

You can contact DAA by phone 01 8144717 (Customer Experience) or by email prm@daa.ie , or contact OCS on 01 9446104.

OAI Travel Certificate

This is a useful document to have with you when travelling abroad especially to non English speaking countries. It contains your name and address and the name and address and contact details of your GP.

This small pocket size Certificate Document is in 16 Languages – Gaeilge, English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Polish, Portuguese, Turkish, Russian, Arabic, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and Chinese.

You should also bring with you a copy of your prescription for ostomy supplies as well as other medication you are taking.

If you would like a travel certificate please contact:

The Secretary,
Ostomy Association of Ireland,
6 Marian Place, Tullamore,
Co. Offaly,
R35 KD78.



Insurance

Travel Insurance is a must when travelling abroad. Check carefully to ensure you are not excluded by age limits or pre-existing medical conditions. If you are in any doubt about travel insurance cover, see your insurance broker or travel agent.

Ostomates who have Health Insurance can obtain Travel Insurance on their Health Insurance Policy.

Ostomates who do not have Private Health Insurance can obtain Travel Insurance through



Allianz Assistance Insurance Company, 18b Beckett Way, Park West Business Campus, Dublin 12, D12 R297. Single Trip Travel Insurance is available through Allianz for all residents in the Republic of Ireland. There is No Age limit. However, you must be aware that the Travel Insurance Policy will NOT PROVIDE COVER for any claims related to pre-existing conditions. Allianz offer 3 levels of Travel Insurance Cover Bronze, Silver and Gold to obtain a Quotation for Travel Insurance visit the Allianz website with the following link – Get A Quote – Travel Insurance (allianz-assistance.ie). You may also call Allianz Customer Services Team on 01 6193681. For further information go to FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions Section on the website by clicking – Travel Insurance-FAQ's / Allianz Assistance (allianz-assistance.ie). Sometimes when applying for Travel Insurance you may be requested to complete a Medical Screening Questionnaire where you provide details of your Medical History. At present Allianz do not request Medical Screening to obtain Travel Insurance but it may be reinstated as a condition in order to obtain Travel Insurance Cover in the near future.

When travelling within the EU and also EEA (European Economic Area) Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland your health cost is covered by your EHIC CARD (European Health Insurance Card) or at a reduced cost. You are only covered for treatment in a Public Hospital and repatriation would also not be covered by the EHIC CARD.

You can obtain your EHIC CARD from your local HSE Health Centre.

The EHIC CARD will not replace travel Insurance.

It only covers necessary healthcare.

You do not need a EHIC CARD if you are visiting the UK.

Showing proof that you are an Irish Resident (for example, your Passport or Driving Licence) is enough and you are covered under the NHS in the event you need medical attention or hospitalisation.





Holiday Packing

Holidays are great but packing for them can get really stressful. Worried you have forgotten something? Cannot fit everything in you bag?

Here are the key things to make your packing hassle free!

- ✓ Check your Passport is valid and not due to expire.
- ✓ Book your Insurance. Insurance offers specialist insurance for people with medical conditions.
- ✓ Check you have enough Ostomy supplies – and extra in case you are delayed.
- ✓ Check baggage allowance for both checked in and carry on luggage. Some airlines allow Free of Charge a 5kg Bag containing medical supplies.



Airlines offering Free 5Kg Check in Baggage for Ostomy Medical Supplies

To avail of a free 5Kg check in bag for your Ostomy Supplies you should obtain from either your GP, Pharmacist or Stoma Care Nurse a Declaration form of your Ostomy Products and Medical Supplies which you need to carry with you. A Declaration Form is available on the OAI Website or from the OAI Secretary. To be Valid it should be dated, signed and stamped by either your GP, Pharmacist or Stoma Care Nurse.

AIR CANADA

As all Ostomy Products and Medical supplies must travel on the same aircraft as the customer. Air Canada will accept Ostomy Product and Medical supplies over and beyond the normal free checked baggage allowance they are not subject to space availability. However, if checked in as a piece of baggage which is not required immediately on arrival they are subject to applicable excess baggage charges. Extra baggage will be approved at the check in desk on receipt of a Declaration Form signed and stamped by a Doctor, Pharmacist or Stoma Care Nurse indicating the need for the Ostomy Products and Medical supplies. This is applicable to checked bags, carry on is limited to the regular allowance.

Aer Lingus

Aer Lingus require you after making your Flight Booking and have received your Booking Reservation Number to contact Aer Lingus Customer Services a minimum of 48hrs before you are due to fly. Aer Lingus Customer Service Number (01) 761 7835 In the event you are having to fly at short notice call Customer Service at your earliest opportunity. This allows Customer Service time to endorse your booking reservation with a note that you will have baggage with Ostomy supplies to bring with you which will be checked in as Free Baggage Allowance. When Checking In have your Declaration Form with you in case you are asked to Produce it.

In the event you were unable to contact Customer Services before going to the airport you produce your Declaration for Ostomy Products and Medical Supplies you need to bring with you when checking in for your flight.

RYANAIR

Ryanair request you to contact their Customer Services before flying if possible 48hrs before your departure.

A Medical Declaration Form is required to carry on Medical Supplies/Medical Equipment onboard a Ryanair Flight,

On provision of a Medical Declaration Form certified and signed by either a General Practitioner, Stoma Care Nurse or Pharmacist a Medical Waiver letter will be issued.

Only items which are listed on the Medical Declaration Form will be accepted for carriage Free of Charge.

Please ensure that these items are packed separately and available for inspection at the airport.

Ryanair Customer Services Contact Number is

(01) 5825932

Monday to Friday 09.00 – 19.00Hrs

Saturday 09.00 – 18.00Hrs

Sunday 09.00 - 18.00Hrs

Bon Voyage





Check In Baggage

Aerosols - pressurised

Scissors

Extra Ostomy Supplies

Liquid Cleaners and Deodorants

Snorkel

Golf Clubs

Sports Rackets

Hand Luggage

Passport

Driving Licence

Tickets

Insurance

Holiday details (hotel, Car hire etc).

Money and cards

Glasses / Sunglasses / Contact lenses

Keys

Phone / tablet / MP3 Player

Travel Adaptor

Pillow and Blanket for the plane

Change of clothes in case your bag is lost

Place in separate transparent bags maximum content 1 litre:

Ostomy supplies - liquids, gels, sprays, maximum size 100ml.

Toiletries, cosmetics, liquids - maximum size 100ml

Medication - have copy of your prescription

Ostomy supplies for travel and extra in case your bags get lost

Pre-cut and mouldable base plates

Disposable Bags

Wipes

Medication to stem diarrhoea

Rehydration Sachets

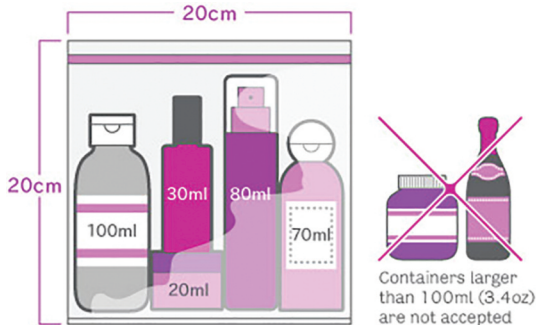
Holiday Check List

Get Prepared. A list helps you remember those important items and plan what to take.

- Pack your Ostomy supplies in your hand luggage, some pre-cut for the journey. Make sure you have double your normal supplies to last for the holidays plus some extra for emergency or delayed return.

- Disposable Bags in hand luggage.

- Pack any liquids you need to take in your hand luggage in containers that hold no more than 100ml and put them in a single transparent, resealable plastic bag approximately 20cm x 20cm. Use separate bags for Ostomy products - gels, liquids, sprays and separate bag - toiletries, cosmetics. Remember there are restrictions on the amount of liquids you can take in your hand luggage.



- Take wet and dry wipes in your hand luggage.

- Scissors in bag to go in the check in luggage.

- Pack liquid cleaners and Deodorants in your check in luggage.

- Currency

- Passport

- EHIC CARD

- Check your holiday insurance is adequate.

- Travel Certificate

- Medication to stem diarrhoea

- Rehydration sachets

Disclaimer

The information in this booklet has been compiled with professional advice and every effort has been made to provide accurate and expert information. There will not be acceptance of liability to any person or entity if there is a loss or damage to any person caused directly or indirectly by the information contained within this booklet.