

Travel tips & tricks

Welcome to Michelle Hayward's 1st column!

Travelling with medications, vitamins, minerals and herbal products

Your dream vacation is set. Maybe it's a trip down south, an Alaskan Cruise or a European adventure to Italy.

You have reviewed your check list again:

- passports
- travel insurance
- itinerary and travel documents
- sunscreen
- house sitter
- and . . .

Everything seems in order. But is it? An often overlooked area of concern for travelers and especially seniors is how to travel safely with medication.

Many travelers are surprised to learn that many medications, vitamins, minerals and herbal products readily available here in Canada could get you in trouble in a foreign country. For instance, common pain killers, allergy and sinus medications that we take for granted are considered illegal in some countries and require the traveller to carry a prescription.

The first thing we want to do is make sure your medication is legal in the country you will be visiting. The easiest way to do this is to check out the Do's and Don'ts of Travel and Drugs at www.voyage.gc.ca then follow up with your family doctor.

Now we can turn to some ideas to lessen the challenges you could face when travelling with medication. It is always a good idea to pack all of your medication in your carry-on luggage. If your checked baggage gets misplaced, you will not be caught empty-handed.

Always keep your medication in its original container(s). If it is a large prescription, ask your pharmacist to re-label and repackage into smaller bottles. It is also a good idea to have a letter from your doctor as well as the original prescription with you.

Do not travel with your medication in a handy day-to-day storage container. If you are stopped by security, you will need to identify each tablet. Keep them in their original containers and separate them once you get to your destination

Make sure you have enough medication to cover the duration of your vacation plus an extra week. If you would need to fill your prescription abroad, the ingredients may not be exactly the same - this could be hazardous to your health.

Be aware of the side effects of your medication. They could increase your risk of sunburn, nausea and blurry vision.

So there you have it. One more item is taken care of so you can relax on your well-deserved vacation. Until next time, travel safe.

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