

## The untold problems of traveling with diabetes - New solutions

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In August 2003, an exceptional heat wave affected Europe, causing 70,000 deaths, including more than 19,000 in France. This year, in 2018, the first abnormal weather came in mid-May. A heat peak was observed, with more than half of France affected by temperatures of 30°C or more and high humidity. This heat wave is already problematic for 750 000 diabetics in France who have to travel with their insulin.

Hot weather and the insidious problem of insulin : About 750,000 diabetics in France use injected insulin. If insulin is exposed to extreme temperatures, it is damaged and very quickly loses its effectiveness. This is a major concern for diabetics during the summer. One of the problems with insulin is that when it is exposed to high heat, it does not show any outside changes but simply becomes less effective, which means that during periods of extreme heat, a diabetic can often inject himself with damaged insulin without knowing it, which radically affects his treatment.

New technologies are appearing for the safe transport of medication : There are over 2.5 million people in France suffering from diseases that prevent them from traveling, because the medication they use must be kept cool. These people are effectively trapped by their diseases. These medications include drugs for chronic diseases such as diabetes, arthritis or multiple sclerosis. This sensitivity to heat also affects growth hormones, adrenaline and anti-venoms. Sensitive medications are divided into two categories: those that must be kept cool (below 25°C) and those that must be kept cold (between 2° C and 8° C). Diegel Uwe, CEO of LifeinA, a French start-up that is developing new solutions


that will allow people to travel anywhere, anytime, knowing that their medication is kept at exactly the right temperature, will present current and future evolutions in this field.

The definite guide to traveling with diabetes: The secret of an enjoyable travel experience for a person with diabetes is in the way in which it is prepared and taking just a couple of precautions before departure can make all the difference. Insulin is sensitive to heat and should ideally be kept in a refrigerator with a temperature between 2°C and 8°C. People with diabetes are much more sensitive to certain events or changes of routine which might affect their metabolism or their lifestyle.

Today, the diabetic who is in control of his disease can travel almost anywhere. It is necessary before leaving:

- To ensure that his diabetes is well controlled.
- To get information about the availability of local diabetic care. The best way to do this is to get in touch with the local diabetes association. Almost without exception, every country in the world has an association dedicated to diabetes information. Simply go on the net, and type the name of the country, together with "diabetes association", and you will quickly get all the info you need. Alternatively, phone your local association and they will most certainly give you the contacts you need.
- Try not to travel alone in countries with extreme temperatures where you do not speak the local language.

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