



# Planning Ahead

## The Key to More Enjoyable Travel with Parkinson's

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Preparing to travel? How exciting! Whether you are planning on driving, flying, taking a train, bus, or cruise planning ahead is key. In this article we'll go over some ideas and tips to help you plan your best journey.

If you are like me, when I was younger sleeping in the car was an adventure when we had the reservation date wrong or just wanted to travel on a whim and take our chances. I am sure we could all share some great stories of those types of adventures. However, as we get older and/or experience health challenges (like Parkinson's), adventures like that are not always welcome and we do not bounce back as easily.

This is where planning comes in and brings confidence that there will be no surprises, or at least none that are within your control. And, even if those surprises do arise you will have a plan and feel more prepared to tackle them. Let's look at ways to plan your trip with confidence, and plan for a trouble-free travel experience. Remember knowledge is power, planning gives you that power and more control over what to expect or how to deal with hiccups that may happen.

**Planning your trip** when travelling with a disability is important. Building your travel plan early and reviewing it before you go will give you the peace of mind of what to expect and the knowledge to know how resolve issues if need be.

Your first connection needs to be your Doctor/ Neurologist. Let them know about your plans and see if there are precautions or suggestions they would

suggest before you take off on your adventure. Check into travel insurance so that if you become ill, you know that you will be covered wherever you are. Inquire about any vaccinations that you may need; your health care team will have this information as well as your travel agent / travel consultant.

With experience comes wisdom and a plan brings peace of mind. Whether you are accessing a travel agent / travel consultant or planning the trip yourself through phone or online, make sure that you mention your disability and explain your accessibility needs. Researching and/or contacting services (airlines, cruise operators, hotels, etc) ahead of time will give you insight to what services are available (walk-in shower in the hotel room, help with baggage at the airport, accessibility on the cruise ship and/or ports of call, etc) and allow you to plan/book accordingly. Get them to provide you with a printed copy of what they provide. This will help you stay organized and give proof if you need to advocate for yourself. Alternatively, if providers are unable to meet your needs it will give you time to investigate other options.

**Accessibility standards** can vary greatly from one country to another, some countries do not have facilities to provide access to people in wheelchairs or other disabilities. Contact your travel agent / travel consultant, destination country's embassy or consulate in Canada. They will help you find out about the services that are available to ensure they meet your individual needs.

## Medication

### Travelling with Medication,

ask about how it may be handled at security points. It is also recommended that carry your medication in your carry-on luggage, you will want it to be accessible if your flight is delayed or if your luggage is delayed or lost.

**A note about medication,** some products sold over the counter in Canadian pharmacies may require prescriptions in other countries, this includes the United States. You may not be able to carry them with you without a prescription. Consult with your health care team for advice, as waiting to get through security is not the time for surprises.

**Your Aware in Care Kit** is one of your best tools when travelling, it is designed to be used for a planned or emergency trip to the hospital. It contains vital information about Parkinson disease that you or your care-partner can refer to in case of emergency. The kit is designed for a quick reference about symptoms, things to be aware of and a place to carry a list and back up doses of your medication. These kits come to you free when you purchase your Parkinson Association of Alberta membership or can be purchased separately. Speak with your Client Services Coordinators for more information.

## Mobility Aids and Flying

If you are travelling with a mobility aid, make sure to let them know ahead of time. Your wheelchair or scooter will need to be checked and stowed. By giving them notice you will ensure that you get the help you need. If you are travelling with a walker there may be some size restrictions, check with your travel agent / travel consultant or your airline to ensure you have the allowable size. It will go on the plane with you and be stored in overhead storage or under your seat.

Taking insurance on your wheelchair or scooter ahead of time is a wise idea in case of damage to your property. Your airline is required to offer the opportunity to make a special declaration of interest for your aid. This allows you to make a declaration of the monetary value and a description in case it is damaged, destroyed, lost, or not



returned to you when you land at your destination. This is an important thing to remember as the international instruments cap the carriers' limit of liability at a much lower value of most mobility aids. This is not good news for you if you have not completed the special declaration of interest, they may only reimburse you for a portion of the value of the aid. You will be able to find more information by consulting your travel agent / travel consultant, the airline's website or by speaking to an airline's agent.

There may be some restrictions on the number and types of batteries for mobility aids. You can find this information through your travel agent, carrier, or the government of the country you will be visiting.

## Safety and Travel

**Car Trouble,** no one wants to be sitting on the side of the road coming up with a plan during a high stress time. Planning ahead and investing in roadside assistance can pay off, whether it be a flat tire or break down, having this service brings a valuable level of safety and support. By doing a little research you will find the right company for you and create that peace of mind.

**Share your travel plan** with someone include your itinerary of where your reservations are. If you are planning on doing some spontaneous touring while you travel have a check in time that you can call, text, or email your contact person or people letting them know where you are.

Travelling is a freedom that so many enjoy, that does not have stop because we have a diagnosis. We just need to plan a bit differently. Remember knowledge is power and planning ahead brings peace of mind.

Safe travels and have a great time!

### Citations

<https://otc-cta.gc.ca/eng/reservation-checklist-persons-disabilities-a-step-step-guide-planning-your-travel>

<https://otc-cta.gc.ca/eng/accessible-transportation-persons-disabilities-regulations>

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/disabilities>

