

Always carry with you

a list of your medications, including the dosage and your reason for taking them, any allergies you have, your blood type and the name of a contact person. Also include contact information for your regular health care provider (e.g., family physician). If you end up in hospital while travelling, this information will be the first thing doctors will need. You may want to consider using MedicAlert® (see page 41).

Medications should be listed under their generic names to ensure they're recognizable to doctors in other countries where the drugs may be sold under different trade names. Depending on the nature of your pre-existing condition, your health care provider may recommend that you carry additional documentation – such as copies of your latest EKG or of your lab, X-ray or ultrasound reports – to assist foreign doctors in the event you experience a health problem abroad.

The senior traveller

Many seniors are in excellent health and are at little increased health risk when travelling, but others have one or more pre-existing health conditions that may worsen during travel.

Changes in environmental conditions (heat, altitude, humidity), activity levels, living conditions, diet and time zones – as well as jet lag – may be harder on you as a mature traveller, particularly if you have a chronic illness. In addition, you may be at greater risk for such problems as dehydration, infectious diseases and injuries. How well you respond to vaccinations may depend on your age and medical history. It's important to discuss with your pharmacist or health care provider whether your activities, travel-related immunizations or preventive drugs will interact with any of your regular medications and create a problem.