

Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!

Travelling with Osteoporosis: Part 2

The All-Important List

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Feeling Romantic?

With Valentine's Day fresh in our minds and spring just around the corner our thoughts can turn to romance and intimacy. Experiencing osteoporosis or a fragility fracture can be life changing in many ways. As is the case with many chronic diseases, two very vulnerable areas that are subject to change are sexuality and intimacy. Click here to read more about [Sexuality, Osteoporosis and You](#) in the May 2011 newsletter from the COPING library.

This is the second in a series of four articles on travelling with osteoporosis. Missed the first article? Like all COPING newsletters it is available from our library and accessible with just a few clicks of your mouse. [Click here to see Part 1.](#)

The All-Important List

It is never too early to start making a detailed list of the things you will need to make your trip as easy and enjoyable as possible. You should also maintain a file of important papers, contacts, identification and travel documents. We become so accustomed to our daily routines that we don't notice what we habitually use until our environment changes. Take note of your routines and the items you typically use. **List** these items and **plan how to pack** them so that they will be easily accessible to you on your trip. Are there special items that you use to help you in the kitchen, bedroom, bathroom or the car? Some of the points below may trigger your memory:

1) Mobility aids – Do you need a cane, walker, or wheelchair all the time or just when you need to walk long distances such as in an airport, or a bus or train terminal?

Most airports and some other travel companies will provide wheelchair and other mobility services within their terminal for travelers who cannot walk long distances. Contact the airline, bus or train line in advance if you need this **temporary** service.

If you need a mobility aid **all the time**, consider bringing your own. You should contact the travel-line ahead of time to ensure that they can accommodate your mobility aid, especially if it is a walker or wheelchair, because larger aids will require some form of storage while you travel.

If you do not need a mobility aid but you **tire easily**, consider bringing along a fold up cane or light weight folding chair, as tourist attractions often have long waiting lines. These items are available in home healthcare supply stores and/or in camping stores (which also have light weight clothing and other accessories for travel).

Do you maintain your independence by using aids, to reach, pick up, shower, or bathe? If yes, don't forget to bring your **reachers**.

2) Back and neck supports – If you are planning a long flight or a long bus or train ride and you suffer from back or neck pain, consider bringing along a portable **back support** that will fit into the seat of the plane or bus, and a curved **travel pillow** to support your neck. These can be found in almost any home healthcare supply store.

3) Flashlight – A pocket flashlight may help you see where you are walking on unfamiliar streets or in an unfamiliar room. A small flashlight or book light can also be helpful when reading a book or menu in low level lighting. Remember to take extra batteries.

4) Shoes and hip protectors – Regardless of one's general health or fitness level, every traveler needs a sturdy, comfortable pair of shoes. Shoes and sandals should have low heels and a rubber sole with a good tread. They should not be able to slip off your feet. You don't want to spoil the time you have at your dream destination with sore feet, nor do you want the added risk of slipping or turning an ankle on cobblestone streets or uneven ground. If you buy new shoes for the trip, try wearing them a few times before your trip to be sure they are comfortable and fit properly. Good shoes and possibly hip protectors will provide an extra layer of protection.

5) Medications

- a) Make sure you pack an **adequate supply** of all your medications, vitamins and other supplements. You must carry your medications in their **original, labeled bottles** and packaging. Your pharmacist may be able to give you smaller labeled bottles if you need them.
- b) If you take a large number of medications and they are difficult to organize, ask your pharmacist if he or she will put them in a labeled **blister pack** for your trip. Your pharmacist may also include your vitamins and supplements in the blister pack so you don't have to carry extra vitamin bottles. Pharmacy labeled prescription medications will help you get through customs much more easily than unlabeled containers of "mystery" pills.
- c) A **note from your doctor** may also help ensure easy passage for you and your medication through security and customs checkpoints, especially if you require the use of controlled substances, such as sleeping pills or narcotic pain killers, or need to carry needles for injectable medications such as insulin or Forteo®.
- d) You need to pay special attention to **liquid medications**. Without proper identification – the original prescription label and that note from your doctor – liquid medication may not be allowed through customs.
- e) Does your medication need to be kept cool? Take it along in a small **cooler** with an ice pack. On the plane, you may be permitted to put your medication in a refrigerator while you re-freeze your ice pack in the plane's freezer. Make sure you ask the airline ahead of time if they offer that service. Most hotels will offer you a small refrigerator.
- f) You should **carry all of your medications with you** in your purse or carry-on bag. This eliminates any problems in the event that you are delayed for hours or days or your luggage is lost.
- g) Be sure you have enough medication for the duration of your trip plus a few days' **extra medications** in case there is a change to your travel schedule
- h) Make a list with the names, addresses and **contact information** of all your doctors, family members and pharmacist to carry with you. Also bring a brief **medical history** with you, including a list of any allergies you may have. Don't forget to bring along any **medic-alert** information you may have.

6) Insurance and emergency contacts – Carry your **insurance** coverage details and **contact information** with you and leave a copy with a friend or relative at home. Arrange to have someone whom you will contact if your ticket, passport or wallet is lost or stolen. Remember that telephones in other countries may work differently than in Canada, so be prepared. You may wish to carry the contact information for the Canadian Embassy of the country you are visiting.

7) Baggage – Travel as lightly as possible. You may want to use (and pay for) two lighter bags instead of one heavy one. Use bags and carry-ons with wheels and long pull handles as they are easier to manage.

Next time, **Part 3 - Itinerary, passport, medications... Let's Go!**

FUNNY BONE:

There are two kinds of cruises - pleasure and with children

Prevent the Fall, Prevent the Fracture – March 22, 2012

1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. ET (Time zones listing below)

On Thursday, March 22, 2012, Janet Barnes and Sarah Nixon-Jackle from Saskatoon will be presenting on the topic of falls and fracture prevention. The virtual forum titled *Prevent the Fall, Prevent the Fracture* will explore why falls occur and suggest resources available to prevent a fall. Participate in the discussion on the relationship between osteoporosis, falls and fractures and explore risk factors for falls and preventive strategies individuals can use to reduce their risk. Join us through the comfort of your own computer and log in on the day of the event and have your questions answered in real time.

Presenters:

**Janet Barnes, Senior Recreation Therapist,
Sarah Nixon-Jackle RN, BScN**

How to participate on the day of the event?

Go to: <http://webcast.otn.ca/>

Click "Live Events", then click "Private Event" on the left side of the screen.

Enter the following:

Username: osteo

Password: forum09

Click on TSM#: 19227640

*No online pre-registration required.

Do you have the system requirements? Test your system by clicking on: <http://webcast.otn.ca/support.html>

For more information please contact: or 1-800-463-6842 ext. 224



Time Zones

PT: 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

MT: 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

CT: 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

ET: 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

AT: 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

*Most of Saskatchewan CST:

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

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