

# COPING

February 3, 2012

**Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!**

## Travel: Part 1

### *Planes, Trains, Automobiles...And Osteoporosis*

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Whether for business or pleasure, travelling can be a wonderful experience. But if you have osteoporosis is it still possible to enjoy your trip safely? We at COPN say yes, with careful planning and attention to the details at every stage of your journey, it is possible. In this article, and in three upcoming issues, we share with you advice collected from the experts and other experienced travelers so that you can take all the necessary precautions to ensure an **enjoyable and bone-safe trip.**

#### Before You Start!

As a first step, it is important that you have a **clear understanding** of your physical needs, limitations and abilities. You can talk to your doctor to determine your fitness to travel and your medical needs both while traveling and at your destination. With your doctor's clearance you can then choose a suitable destination and means of travel. Consider using a travel agent who can assist both in planning and booking a trip that meets all of your medical and fitness requirements. This includes any accessibility needs you may have as a result of your osteoporosis. You or your travel agent should contact the airline, train line, tour companies, hotels or cruise ship to be sure that they understand and can accommodate your needs.

Your doctor can also advise you about any necessary **vaccinations** for your trip or if you need to update any previous vaccinations. Some vaccinations can take up to six months to administer, so be sure to start this process early rather than waiting until shortly before your departure.

**Keep records** so you know what to expect on each leg of your journey. Accessibility standards vary from country to country, so be prepared to describe in detail the support or features you may need. For example, you may need wheelchair assistance at the airport, extra leg room on the airplane, a seat near the aisle, a special diet, etc.

You will need to consider **travel and medical insurance** because medical care in a foreign country can be very expensive. When purchasing insurance, be sure to ask about age restrictions and coverage for pre-existing conditions. Many medical insurance policies do not cover expenses for illnesses that are related to a pre-existing condition, so it is important to clarify whether or not you will be covered if you have a recurrence of a previous illness. In addition, medical

insurance policies often require a stability period that can range anywhere from 7 days to several months prior to departure. A stability period is a period of time during which you have not had any new treatment or changes to your medications. Make sure that you understand the requirements of the stability period for the travel insurance that you choose, and see your doctor for a check-up well before that period to minimize the chance of any changes to your medications and treatment shortly before your departure. You will also need **cancellation insurance** because there is always the possibility that something may happen at the last minute (health related or otherwise) that requires you to change your travel plans.

Next time, **Part 2 – The All-Important List**

## FUNNY BONE:

### **Children are quick!**

TEACHER: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

DONALD: H I J K L M N O.

TEACHER: What are you talking about?

DONALD: Yesterday you said it's H to O.

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