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COPN: Proudly Celebrating our 10th Anniversary **Travelling with Osteoporosis: Part 3** ***Itinerary, passport, medications...Let's Go!***

This is a revised and updated version of an article published in the March 2, 2012 issue of COPING.

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 view Parts 1 & 2.](#)

Itinerary, passport, medications... Let's Go!

The old saying "Getting there is half the fun" can be true, especially if you are properly prepared. Consider these suggestions for your trip to and from your holiday destination.

1) Prepare well – A good night's sleep is essential before traveling. Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing and carry a light sweater to adjust for a cool aircraft, bus or train. Pack essentials, such as medications in their original containers, contact lens supplies, an extra pair of glasses, and a small flashlight or book light in your carry-on. You can get up-to-date government information on what you are allowed to bring on the plane in your purse or carry-on bag by checking the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority website, www.catsa.gc.ca. It will also give you useful information about security screening and travel advice for families, seniors and people with special needs. If you are traveling to the US, you might want to check the American equivalent, the site of the Transportation Security Administration, www.tsa.gov.

2) Do not lift! – Remember that this is the time to be aware of every movement. You will be in unfamiliar surroundings and may be distracted, in a hurry and impatient. This is the time to slow down and do it right. A broken bone can quickly spoil a trip. Budget for extra time. Also budget for the fact that you may need to pay or tip for help if you need it and remember that it is only a small fraction of the cost of this wonderful trip. Be sure the people who are helping you with your luggage are legitimate.

3) Walking to gates – Airports often require long walks from gate to gate or gate to baggage pick-up. If you are uncertain about your ability to walk long distances, request **wheelchair assistance** in advance. You can always decline it when you

arrive, but it may be very helpful if you find yourself stiff and sore after a long flight or if the destination airport is larger than you imagined with long distances from gate to gate. You may also arrange for **pre-boarding** so that you can request assistance with your carry-on bag and get settled into your seat before other passengers board. This also shortens the time you will be standing in a line-up while boarding the plane.

4) The carry-on bag - When flying, be aware that some flight attendants will not help you lift your carry-on bag into the overhead compartment for fear of injuring their back. Other travelers around you will almost always assist you instead, but you may need to explain why you are asking. Remember – osteoporosis is the silent disease that is usually not visible – so don't be shy to ask your co-travelers for help.

5) Other considerations

- a) Book an **aisle seat** so you can more easily **get up** every half hour to walk and do your stretching exercises.
- b) Drink lots of **water** and be aware that coffee and alcohol may dehydrate you further.
- c) **Protect your back** while sleeping. You may want to bring along a back support or purchase pillows or blankets on board. A well placed pillow or two can make all the difference during a long flight or ride.
- d) In addition, a well fitted bean bag neck pillow or traveler's pillow will **support your neck** as you sleep in a seated position. Some airlines sell inflatable pillows but these may not be as supportive or as comfortable as the one you purchase from your home healthcare supplier.
- e) Depending on your height it may help to **rest your feet** on a raised surface, such as your carry-on bag or purse, to better align your hips and knees.
- f) You may want to bring an iPod or MP3 player with **music**, stress reduction tapes, or a good paperback if you like to read.
- g) If you need heating rubs to relax your muscles try to bring unscented items. Co-travelers may have allergies to scents and you may not be permitted to use anything scented by the airline, rail or bus line. **Unscented** creams and **massage** oils are a good choice.

Next time, Part 4 - **Simple Exercises to Stay Limber While You Travel and We Have Arrived!**

FUNNY BONE:

Like all great travelers, I have seen more than I remember, and remember more than I have seen.

A Recipe from our Sponsor

Ultimate Breakfast Smoothie

Course: *Beverages & Snacks*

Preparation Time: *5 mins*

Yields: *2 to 3 servings*

3/4 milk product serving(s) per person

For more information about this recipe:

<http://www.dairygoodness.ca/getenough/recipes/ultimate-breakfast-smoothie>



Ingredients

1 banana, peeled and broken into chunks

1 cup (250 mL) plain or fruit-flavoured

yogurt

1 cup (250 mL) **milk**

1 cup (250 mL) mixed fruit, (fresh or frozen)

1 tbsp (15 mL) honey

1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla extract

Preparation

In a blender, or in a tall cup using an immersion blender, combine banana, yogurt, milk, mixed fruit, honey and vanilla and purée until smooth. Pour into chilled glasses and serve immediately.

This issue of COPING is sponsored by Dairy Farmers of Canada

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These newsletters are not intended to replace individualized medical advice. Readers are advised to discuss their specific circumstances with their healthcare provider.



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