

# IG Living

## Have Wheelchair, Will Travel

Presented by

Patient Advocate



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THE MYOSITIS ASSOCIATION

2018 Annual Patient Conference  
San Diego, California

# Your Illness Doesn't Have to Stop You!



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# Pre-Planning

**TRAVEL IS STRESSFUL** and often unpredictable for patients with a disability or chronic illness. Proper planning can relieve some of the stress and help make your trip a success!

# Disabled Traveler

Travel by people with disabilities  
has been **increasing**.



# Universal Tips

# PLANNING TRAVEL



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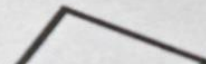
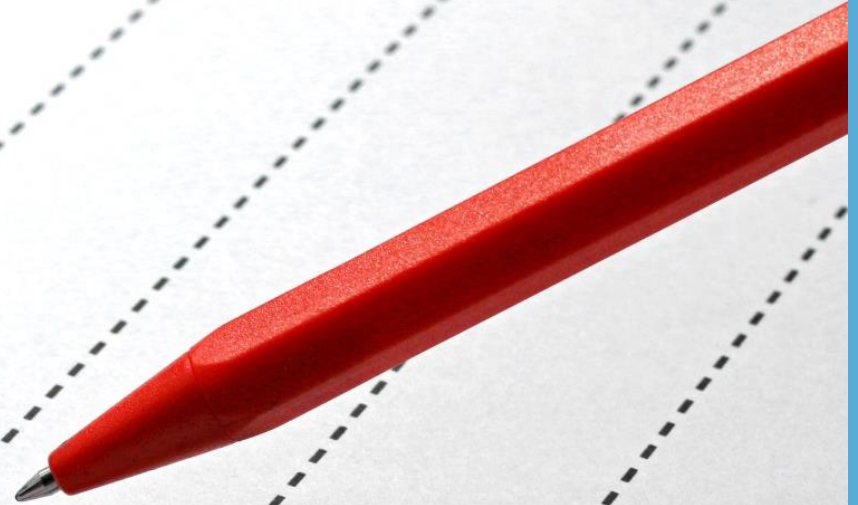


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# Pre-Travel Checklist

Travel Checklist



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# Deciding Where to Go

## Wheelchair Accessible Travel Destinations

[WheelchairTravel.org/Destinations](http://WheelchairTravel.org/Destinations)

### Where to Go Outside the U.S.

- You want to have the same experiences as those who travel without any hindrances.
- You may encounter some difficulties, especially because different countries have different accessibility regulations.
- With careful preparation and a positive attitude, you can still make it happen.

# When to Go

- Patients should consider their treatment and appointment schedules when booking vacation dates.
- For an extended trip, you need to find an infusion center or doctor in the area where you are visiting.
- If you are going overseas, ensure you have enough medication or the ability to get your medication.
- Consider the weather.



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# Tips

- Always have an emergency contact available locally in the area you are visiting.
- Make sure you know the location of the closest hospital and emergency room.
- Have a medical identification card/jewelry on hand in case of an emergency.
- Always contact your specialty pharmacy when traveling to keep them informed. It may need additional orders from your prescribing MD if you are traveling to a different state or country.

# Precautions

Find out about **insurance**, **vaccinations** and **outbreaks** before you book your travel.



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# CDC Recommendations

For travelers with a chronic illness or disability



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# Insurance

Below are three (3) types of insurance every traveler should consider buying, especially travelers with chronic illnesses - [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/insurance](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/insurance)

- 1. Trip Cancellation Insurance** — covers the cost of your trip if, for example, you have to reschedule or cancel because you are too sick to travel.
- 2. Travel Health Insurance** — covers the cost of healthcare received in other countries. Even if you have health insurance in the United States, it might not cover you overseas.
- 3. Medical Evacuation Insurance** — covers the cost of transportation to high-quality healthcare facilities in the event of an emergency. This type of insurance is important if you will be traveling in rural or remote areas.

When selecting an insurance policy, always read the fine print so you are sure it covers what you need it to cover. - [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/chronic-illnesses](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/chronic-illnesses)



# Vaccines. Medicines. Advice.

You can cross-search which vaccines you need by:

- Destination
- Mode of travel
- Disease
- Length of stay

[wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel)

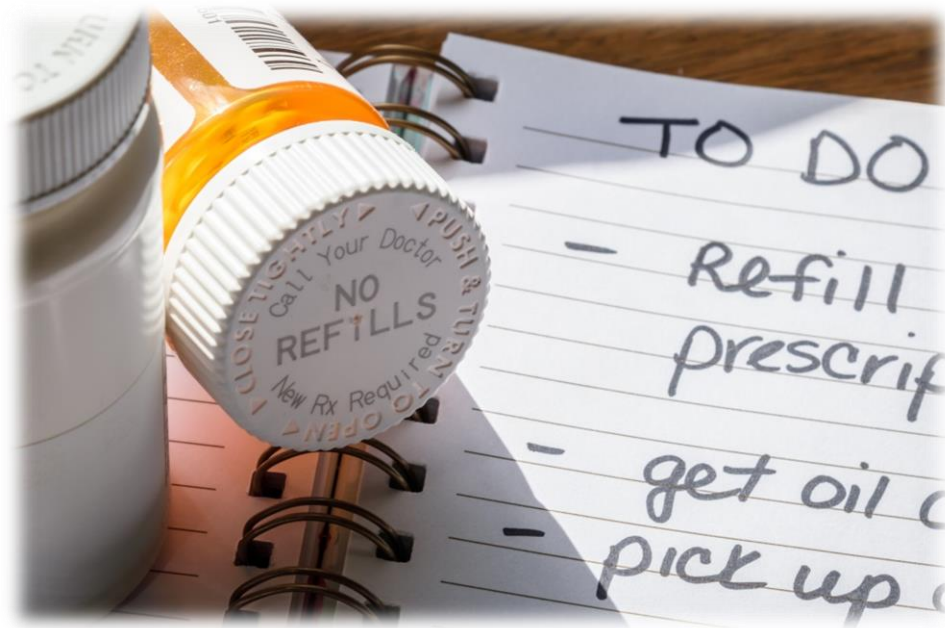
# Travel Health Notices

## Search By Country Name or Disease

- Travel notices are designed to inform travelers and clinicians about current health issues related to specific destinations. These issues may arise from disease outbreaks, special events or gatherings, natural disasters, or other conditions that may affect travelers' health.

[wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices)

# Medications



- Get a copy of all your prescription medications.
- Take enough medications/medical supplies to cover the whole time you will be away and any possible delays.

# Medical Information

- **Summary & Translation**—Ask your doctor for a medical summary and, if necessary, have it translated into the local language(s).
- **Contact Info**—Carry the contact information for your own team of doctors, including phone numbers and email addresses.
- **Local Physicians**—Find out details of doctors in the places where you will be staying.



# Emergency Kit

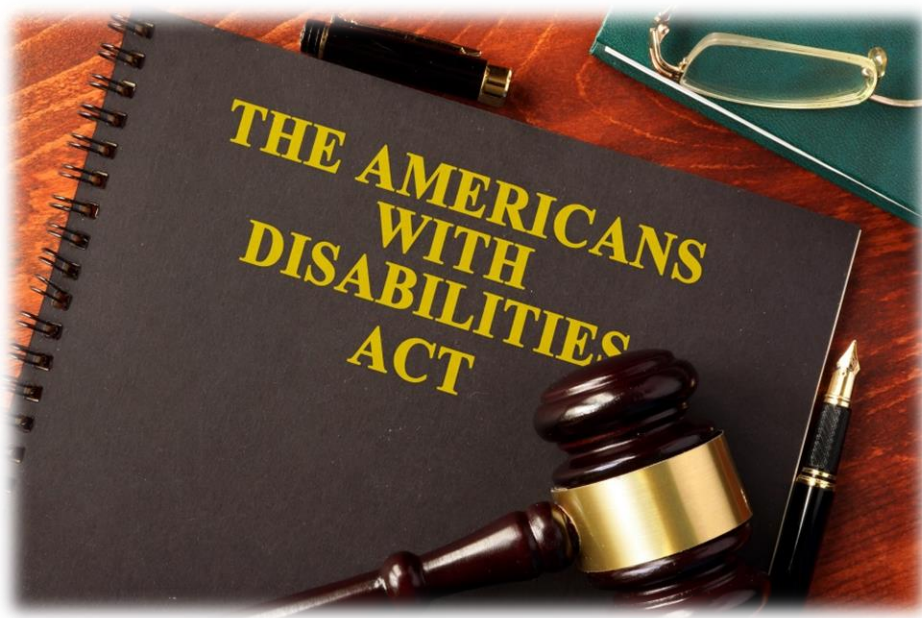
Pack an **in-case-of-emergency kit**. This kit should include anything you need for unplanned events, including:

- Extra meds
- Bed pan or urinal if you are a wheelchair user
- Wipes or toilet paper
- Extra clothes



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# ADA Design Requirements for Hotels



The **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** established a series of **accessible design requirements** for the construction of hotels and other lodging facilities that apply to the design of hotel rooms.

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# Choosing a Location to Stay

## Accessibility Checklist for Hotel Accommodation

Accessibility is not standardized in the hotel industry and can be easily interpreted in different ways by hotel employees.

Rather than look for “wheelchair-friendly” hotels in the forums, have your criteria and needs ready and deal with the hotel directly.

Oftentimes, hotel websites will show they have accessible rooms, but their definitions may differ widely and they may not be designed to meet your needs.

**At this point, call the hotel directly.**

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# Request Reasonable Accommodations

## Requests **Likely** to Be Honored

- Remove bed frame or box spring to lower bed to more acceptable height
- Place bed frame on bed risers provided by guest to allow for transfer hoist or Hoyer lift use
- Relocate telephone or other equipment to more accessible position
- Remove additional furniture from room (i.e.: chairs or tables) that may impede access for wheelchair user
- Provide a mini-refrigerator for medication storage
- Remove interior door in guest room (i.e.: bathroom door) that might otherwise impede access for wheelchair user
- Provide an extension cord to allow greater access to electricity.

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## Requests **Unlikely** to Be Honored

- Provide transfer hoist or Hoyer lift
- Provide specialized equipment for use in bathroom (i.e.: bedside commode or raised toilet seat)
- Adjust height of bed where it is not technically feasible to do so





# Accommodations Outside the U.S.

One of the primary concerns for disabled travelers is **finding a hotel that is truly accessible**. Many hotels may describe themselves as “wheelchair-friendly” or say “disabled guests welcome” when their hotel may actually have significant obstacles for disabled travelers.

# Finding Accessible Hotels Outside the U.S.

- Research options and make a short list of hotel choices.
- Call the hotel directly and ask questions.
- Book with a travel agency that specializes in clients with chronic illness or a disability.
- Check each country's legal requirements.

# Choosing a Means of Travel

What you **need to know!**



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# Air Travel

**Remember:** Air travel is difficult no matter what your age or disability.



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# Your Rights Under the Air Carrier Access Act

The **Air Carrier Access Act of 1986** (ACAA) was designed to prohibit any discrimination against passengers with disabilities by air carriers. It was meant to open the skies and the world to persons regardless of any physical or intellectual disabilities.



# What You Need to Know!

Travelers should note that the **ACAA** is a U.S. law. The rights and protections outlined here do not apply to all flights in the world. The **law only applies to the following flights:**

- Any flight **departing** from an airport in the U.S., regardless of carrier.
- Any flight **arriving** to an airport in the U.S., regardless of carrier.
- Any flight operated by a **U.S.-registered air carrier**. This includes flights between two international destinations. For example, a United Airlines flight between Hong Kong and Singapore would be subject to the ACAA, because United Airlines is a U.S. flagged carrier.

# Tips for Air Travel

- Book well in advance.
- Call the airline directly to make sure your needs can be met.
- Document the day, date, time and name of the person you spoke with.
- Request a specific seat in advance. Be aware that not all seats have moveable armrests.
- Arrange ground transportation ahead of time.
- Arrive at the airport earlier than advised.

# Tips for Air Travel cont.

- Request for an un-ticketed individual to assist you through security to your boarding gate, if needed, by going to the airline's check-in desk and receiving a "pass" allowing him or her to go through the screener checkpoint without a ticket.
- Set up special dietary requirements or need for assistance during meals (*airline personnel are not permitted to assist with eating, but should assist with opening packages and identifying food items on a meal tray*).
- Allow 90 minutes between connecting flights or longer.
- Make sure the plane's bathrooms are accessible.
- Plan for delays and layovers.

Mobility International USA

[www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/airtraveltips](http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/airtraveltips)

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# Ask for Assistance



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# Air Travel Outside the U.S.

**The European Union has also outlined the rights of disabled airline passengers in Europe:**

- Commercial passenger air services departing from, transiting through or arriving to airports situated in the territory of a Member State of the European Union.
- Flights operated by an European Union carrier that depart from an airport in a third country and arrive to an airport within the European Union.
  - Ex: A Lufthansa flight from Tokyo, Japan to Frankfurt, Germany.

[wheelchairtravel.org/air-travel/european-union-disability-rights-air-travel](http://wheelchairtravel.org/air-travel/european-union-disability-rights-air-travel)



# Medications and Supplies

## Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

- TSA allows medications past airport checkpoints once they have been screened. Be sure to **keep your medications in their original containers**.
- Your healthcare provider should write a letter of necessity for medications and supplies.

## What to Have in Your Carry-On

- Place medication and supplies in your carry-on or in a bag designated for medication so that you can easily access them.
- This eliminates the risk that needed medications could be lost with checked luggage.
- A bedpan or urinal in your carry-on luggage just might save the day if you are a wheelchair user.

# Train Travel

- Check the website of the system you are looking to use
- Call and confirm accessibility



# How Can I Get My Wheelchair on a Train?

Train networks across the world, including Amtrak in the U.S., can accommodate both manual and powered wheelchairs.

Due to the gaps between the train and station platform, **bridge plates** and **ramps** are used to allow wheelchairs to roll smoothly onto the train.



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# What if I Need Assistance?

- For domestic travel **within the U.S.**, Amtrak is the primary operator of rail services. Assistance can be requested by booking directly through the Amtrak website. You'll also receive a 15% discount on your ticket if requesting a wheelchair seating space.
- For international travel **outside of the U.S.**, there is no single rail operator. This can make figuring out who to call difficult for wheelchair users.
- Purchase tickets in person at the train station 1-2 days prior to planned travel.
- The ticket sales agent at the train station can help you to place the request for wheelchair assistance.
- Many rail operators provide significant **discounts to persons with disabilities**, so be sure to ask!

# Tips for Train Travel

- Book your ticket more than 24 hours in advance.
- Arrive early.
- Ask for boarding assistance.
- Look for a seat next to a charging station for your electronics and wheelchair.

[WheelchairTravel.org](http://WheelchairTravel.org)



# Cruise Travel

Before booking a cruise, ensure the ship can meet your needs since not all cruise ships are handicap accessible.



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# Tips for a Successful Cruise

- Look for ports of call where you can easily embark/disembark.
- Know your mobility equipment.
- Do not leave your wheelchair or scooter unattended.
- Charge your equipment nightly.
- Watch your speed.
- Ask for assistance.
- Keep the helpline number readily accessible.
- Consult or book with a travel agent who specializes in booking cruises; he or she can ensure the cruise ship can meet your needs.

# Automobile Travel



- Map out your route of travel.
- Make sure your friends or family know your route of travel.
- Book your hotel rooms ahead of time.
- Service your car before you leave.
- Make sure your mobility equipment is in good working order.
- Bring a travel-size repair kit containing all of the necessary tools and materials needed to change a pneumatic tire.

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# Travel Industry



In response to the growing number of disabled travelers, the travel industry has been expanding services for the disabled.

Consider using a **disability travel specialist**. Some agents provide stellar niche services.

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## Questions?

Contact Information

Patient Advocate



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