



In association with : Nottingham University Hospitals 
NHS Trust

Written by Professor Hywel Williams, Dr Ruth Murphy, Dr Jane Ravenscroft, Nurse Consultant Sandra Lawton and parents on behalf of the Nottingham Support Group for Carers of Children with Eczema.

Travelling abroad with allergies - Information for Patients

Research and preparation before travelling abroad should help to reduce eczema flares due to allergies.

Medical care accessibility

Prior to booking your destination, consider where you would access medical care and how far you would be from the nearest doctor and hospital. Your choice of accommodation may need to take into account the ease of storage of treatments that need to be kept cool (epipens and some creams fall into this category). If your medication is particularly bulky, you may need to take into consideration baggage allowances when choosing your airline carrier.

Travelling with medications

Ensure you have sufficient amounts of medications, including those you may need to cope with a flare, and check their expiry dates. If travelling to a very hot and humid country, you may need to reduce the quantities of usual emollients you need to take, or choose a thinner emollient. And the converse may be the case for a very cold country. For hand luggage you may be asked to prove that any medication or medical equipment is necessary for the duration of your trip. You can do this by showing a copy of your prescription or a letter from your doctor. Since the introduction of anti-terrorism measures, you will need approval from the airline or airport to carry on to the airplane medical creams or liquids bigger than 100ml. Medications in tablet form, such as antihistamines, should not be restricted. Only take in your hand baggage what you need for the trip and pack the rest in your hold luggage. More details can be found at: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Foreigntravel/AirTravel/DG_176922

Covering the cost of treatment

Travel insurance to cover medical emergencies is essential. Check that the insurance covers pre-existing medical problems such as eczema. If travelling within Europe, apply for a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which offers you access to reduced-cost medical treatment at:

<http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/Healthcareabroad/pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx>

Food allergy – threats whilst there

Food allergy sufferers will need to know what food allergens they may experience whilst overseas. What are the common ingredients used in the local food? Allergies to nuts, dairy or gluten may be harder to avoid. What are the laws on food labelling in that country? Some countries require companies to put every ingredient on the label, including a “may contain traces” warning. Others are much more lax in their labeling procedures. With a food allergy, you may have to accept the fact that you will not be able to enjoy the local cuisine as part of your trip, and instead stick with things that are familiar.

Food allergy – communicating a problem

The second part of your research should be translating the allergy information into the local language. Translate phrases such as “I am/my son/my daughter is severely allergic to _____”, a list of your symptoms if you are having a reaction (this will emphasize the severity of your allergy) and “I am/my son/my daughter is having an allergic reaction and require a doctor immediately”. Get these phrases printed on cards, (with the English phrase on the reverse) and carry them in your wallet with you. They are handy to show to local waiters or to anyone in an emergency situation.

website - www.nottinghameczema.org.uk

email - enquiry@nottinghameczema.org.uk



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Avoiding allergens whilst there

Consider packing items you know are allergen safe into your luggage. Bring a box or two of snacks (however, look into the laws about bringing food into your destination – dried goods are best) that you know are safe. If allergic to certain detergents and you need to do laundry while gone – pack some detergent. Do not pack these things in your carry-on. If you must bring food onto the flight, buy something at the airport beforehand.

Preparing the way

If you are travelling with a tour, inform the company of the allergy information beforehand. Your guide should be helpful in communicating your needs and a good one will do so before you get to a hotel or restaurant, so they have time to make preparations. They can inform other people in your bus if you are allergic to scents (like perfume). It is also good to inform your airline as well – only some airlines have a nut free policy.

For further advice please contact
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For advice on support issues please contact the NSGCCE via the website
www.nottinghameczema.org.uk and click on the contact icon  at the
top of most pages or email us at enquiry@nottinghameczema.org.uk

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