

Traveling With Refrigerated Medications



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Having arthritis doesn't mean you have to miss out on the things you want to do or places you want to go. Even if you are taking an injectable [biologic medication](#) that requires refrigeration, it is still possible to travel almost anywhere with a little advance planning. While you should certainly talk to your doctor about the best methods for traveling with your refrigerated medication, this article contains advice gathered through experience.

Your Transport Container

You'll need a little insulated travel cooler for keeping your medication cold while you travel. In your transport container you should pack as many doses as you need for your trip, an ice pack, alcohol wipes for injections, and extra ziplock bags for ice (see below). It may also be useful to include the box or container your medication arrives in with your name and prescription information in case the TSA requests to see it. You can also pack a travel-sized sharps container separately or plan to keep used syringes in your transport container for proper disposal upon your return.

Flying With Refrigerated Medications

If your travel plans include flying, it is important to remember to always carry your refrigerated medications onto the plane with you. Your medication may freeze and become ruined if it is placed with your checked luggage in the baggage compartment.

The TSA allows medically necessary liquids, associated supplies (such as syringes), and ice packs to keep liquids cool to pass through security after screening. Passengers are requested to inform TSA personnel that the liquids are medically necessary and to separate their transport container from their other belongings at the security check point. Travelers may call TSA Cares at 1-855-787-2227 prior to traveling if they have questions, or visit the [TSA website](#) for additional information.

For flights longer than a few hours, your ice pack may not be sufficient to keep your medication cool for the entire flight. You may want to tell a flight attendant about your medication when you board the plane. He or she may be able to put your medication in the airplane's refrigerator or provide additional ice when your ice pack melts. Make sure your transport container is labeled with your contact information and don't forget your medication on the plane!

When You Have Access To A Fridge

Most hotel rooms these days have mini-fridges in them, so keeping your medication cool after you arrive is generally pretty easy. However, make sure the fridge is adjusted properly and beware of fridges that turn off when you leave the room. For example, in some countries it is standard practice to require the insertion of your room key to turn on the lights. This means there is no power to the room when you leave and take your key with you.

If there is no refrigerator in your room, the fridge turns off when you leave, or you need to check out of your room but leave your luggage for the day, tell the front desk that you have medicine that needs to be refrigerated. They should be able to accommodate your needs. If there is a language barrier, you may want to ask to see the fridge so you can make sure your medication will be safe.

When You Don't Have Access To A Fridge

If you will not have access to a fridge, it is still possible to take your refrigerated medication with you. Start by freezing your ice pack and using it as long as stays solid, then use the ziplock bags in your transport container for ice. You can ask for a small amount of ice almost anywhere, such as a coffee shop, gas station, bar, or hotel. It is prudent to offer to pay for the ice, but many times employees will happily give you a cup of ice if you tell them you need it to keep medication cold while traveling. You may want to double-bag your ice or put your medication in a separate ziplock bag in order to prevent leaking when the ice inevitably melts. When using ice to keep your medications cold, it is especially important to check on it every couple of hours to see if you need additional ice.

With a little advance planning and vigilance while traveling, it is totally possible to take your refrigerated medications all around the world with you.