

## Travel Tips from Tri-State Lymphedema Clinic

Before leaving:

1. Check with your doctor that you have enough prescription drugs (if you need them) to see you through your holiday. Get them filled by your pharmacist before you leave, however, carry the scripts with you in case of mishap, or for checking by foreign Customs Officers (which may happen). Ask for a prescription for antibiotics as a precaution if you do get an infection, and carry them with you. (Penicillin is the one of choice, unless you are allergic to this). If you are traveling to a tropical country in the wet season, where filariasis is endemic, take D.E.C. with you. Take one dose/week. If you feel flu-like symptoms after taking it lasting for 24 hrs., then take another dose the following week etc.
2. Buy a top quality sunburn cream SPF 20-30+. Remember you can get sunburned through a compression garment, especially the synthetic fabric makes. Take moisturizing lotion and body wash -mineral-oil based. (not soap)
3. Travel Insurance (that covers health as well as luggage) is worthwhile providing you read the small print. You may have to state that you have a pre-existing condition to claim payment if you need treatment. (This may need to be signed by your Doctor.)
4. Buy some insect repellent, and take something to treat stings if you do get them. A good perfume seems to work as well as repellent - buy some duty free!
5. Pack some antifungal powder and use it, especially between the toes! This may only be a prophylactic measure (to prevent infection), but hotel bathrooms, pool areas and warm moist climates in particular, can lead to the onset of tinnea (Athletes foot). This can be easily transferred to the groin or under the breast fold areas, especially when lymphedema is present. Apart from inflammation, it also causes breakdown of the skin so that bacterial entry is facilitated, which may lead to bacterial infections. This powder may also need to be "puffed" into your shoes especially if you are wearing sneakers or boots.
6. If you need vaccinations, do not have them in the affected limb! Sometimes you get a reaction to these, so if possible have them at intervals, if you need more than one.

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