

Traveling in the United States or Internationally With an Intrathecal Baclofen Pump

Our patients have been able to travel nationally and internationally without having trouble with their intrathecal baclofen pumps. However, you'll need this information to help you prepare and plan appropriate activities for your trip.

Preparing for Travel

Before you leave:

1. Have your pump refilled. That way, if your return is delayed you won't run out of baclofen.
2. Bring a supply of baclofen tablets. You'll receive a prescription from your healthcare provider.
3. Know the name, address and phone number of a provider in the area you're traveling to who is familiar with baclofen pumps. Your clinic nurse will help find this information.
4. Take your Medtronic identification card and the 800 number for Medtronic. If you'll be flying on commercial aircraft, ask your provider for an identification card that documents that you have an implanted medical device.
5. Bring an extra copy of your printout and catheter implant data. You'll get a copy of your printout with each refill.
6. If you are going to be separated from your luggage for most of the day, keep oral medicines and other supplies you might need with you.
7. If you'll be traveling into a new time zone, talk with your provider about programming your pump to adjust for the changes. (See details below.)
8. If you'll need a pump refill before you return home, let us know, so we can help you arrange for a refill while you're traveling. (This will be possible in many, but not all, areas of the United States.) Make sure you clarify any insurance issues with and get relevant records to the temporary provider. Refills abroad may not be possible in some parts of the world. It is important to check ahead.

Time Zones

Your pump won't adjust to time zone changes. For international travel involving several hours' difference a simple continuous infusion mode will be easiest. Also, patients getting boluses at regular intervals (for example, every 6 hours) might not need much adjustment. If you are on a complex continuous infusion mode and will be traveling to another country, discuss with your health care provider to determine the best option.

Airplane Travel

You can travel on commercial airplanes because they are pressurized. But if you are taking a non-commercial

airplane, you'll need to make sure it doesn't go up more than 8,000 feet.

Your pump might set off the airport's metal detectors, so you'll need to bring your Medtronic pump identification card in case you need to show it to airport security. The metal detectors won't interfere with the functioning of your pump.

Recreational Activities

While you'll be able to do many things on your trip, you need to avoid activities which could affect how your pump is working. The influence of air pressure, water pressure, collision and water temperature need to be considered before you start an activity. Follow these general limitations:

Don't do activities where you'll be:

- 8,000 feet above sea level (unless it's in a pressurized environment, such as a commercial airplane)
- 43 feet under seawater
- In water that's 120 degrees or higher
- Subject to significant jarring, hard starts and stops

Air Pressure

All activities, (such as hot-air balloon rides, skydiving and hiking in the mountains) need to be done at less than 8,000 feet, otherwise the altitude can will cause your pump to deliver too much baclofen, giving you an overdose.

Water Pressure

All activities (such as scuba diving and snorkeling) need to be in less than 43 feet of seawater, otherwise the altitude could deliver too much baclofen, giving you an overdose.

You need to avoid activities where you pump catheter might fall out. Here are some activities you might be considering:

Can I go:

- Parasailing? No. The pump catheter might be broken or dislodged during landing.
- Water tubing behind a boat? Yes, at moderate speeds. No, at high speeds where the pump catheter might be broken in a fall or dislodged. We recommend you use a helmet and wear a life jacket and helmet.
- Skiing? Yes, if it is adapted downhill or cross-country skiing. We recommend you use a helmet.
- On amusement park rides? Yes, unless the ride involves significant jarring or hard starts and stops.
- Horseback riding? Yes. We recommend you use a helmet.

Water Temperature

Hot or cold water can affect how your pump works.

Wear a wet suit if you'll be in cold water because the cold could set off your pump's alarm.

Only use a hot tub or sauna if the temperature is below 102 degrees. A temperature higher than that can cause your pump to give you an overdose.

[Make An Appointment](#) **651-290-8707** [Refer a Patient](#) **651-325-2200**

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](#).