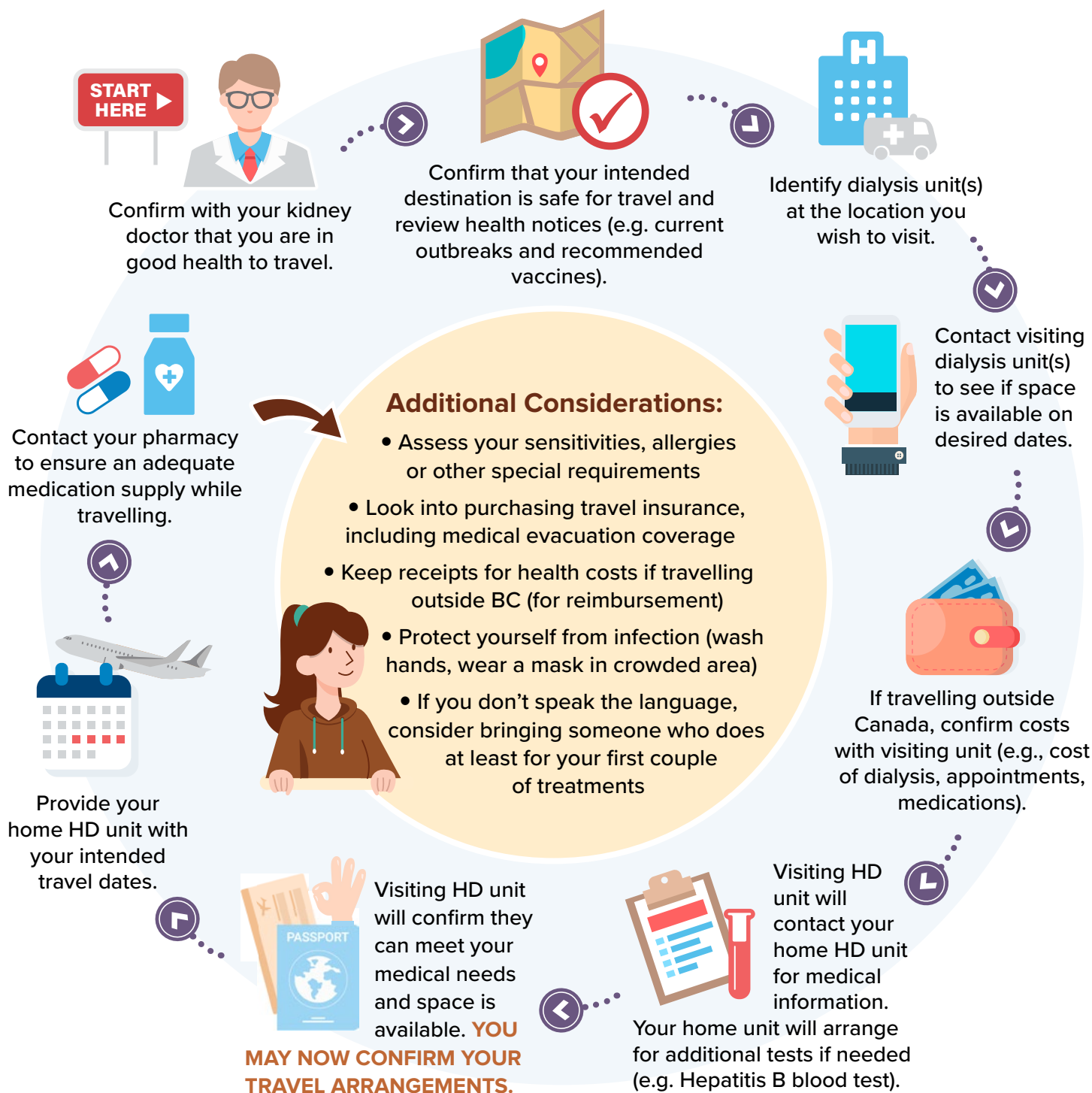




Travel at a Glance

For BC Hemodialysis Patients Who Want to Travel (In or Outside BC)¹ — details on the following pages



¹This handout does not apply to patients travelling for medical appointments (e.g., assessment for transplant). In these situations, the arrangements will be made by your home HD unit.

Hemodialysis and Travelling



To ensure the above steps are taken, it's important to make your travel plans well in advance. Contact the preferred dialysis unit at your destination **at least 3 months** before you wish to travel (the further ahead, the better). If you're travelling within BC, we will do our best to accommodate **urgent/unexpected travel** where space and staffing allows (e.g., if you're attending a funeral or visiting a sick relative). **DO NOT BOOK TRAVEL PLANS UNTIL THE VISITING DIALYSIS UNIT TELLS YOU IT IS OK.**

Here are the steps in details:

<input type="checkbox"/> 1.	Check with your kidney doctor to ensure you're fit to travel. This usually means: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You are medically stable and any issues with your hemodialysis care are under control.• You have a functioning fistula, graft, or permanent central line catheter with stable blood flows. Temporary central line catheters are not accepted.• Your medical and dialysis needs can be accommodated by a visiting dialysis centre.
<input type="checkbox"/> 2.	Confirm that your intended destination is safe for travel. This includes checking health notices and advisories (i.e. current outbreaks and recommended vaccines). Go to Government of Canada ► Travel advice and advisories by destination for more details.
<input type="checkbox"/> 3.	Identify a dialysis unit (or units) in the area you wish to visit. Travel in BC: Go to BCRenal.ca ► Kidney Services for a list of dialysis units in BC. See the BC Travel and Dialysis Contact List for a contact person at each centre. Travel outside BC or internationally: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Within Canada: Cihi.ca/en/canadian-dialysis-centres-accepting-visitors• Within the United States: Dialysisfinder.com• International:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Globaldialysis.com (dialysis unit locations)• Davita.com/international (dialysis unit locations)• Bookdialysis.com (online booking engine for travelling dialysis patients)• Dialysisatsea.com (travel company that specializes in cruises for people on dialysis) <p>Patients and families are responsible for making their own travel and dialysis arrangements. If you need further information or assistance, your renal social worker may be able to help.</p>

□ 4.	<p>Contact the visiting dialysis unit(s) at least three months before travel to check if there's space available on your desired dates. DO NOT book your travel until the visiting dialysis unit tells you it is OK. After reviewing your medical documents, the visiting unit will confirm whether they can meet your dialysis needs and if they have space available (covered in more detail in point #7).</p>
□ 5.	<p>Ask about the cost of dialysis and other medical appointments, tests, or treatments.</p> <p>Travel in BC: If you're travelling within the province, costs for dialysis are covered and coverage for other health services is the same as if you were at home. If you need to travel to receive non-emergency specialist services (i.e. services not available in your home community), the Travel Assistance Program (TAP) can help with transportation costs.</p> <p>Travel outside BC: The cost of health services and available coverage will vary depending on your destination (i.e. whether you are travelling within Canada or internationally).</p> <p>Travel in Canada (except Quebec): Costs for dialysis and most health services are covered through an agreement between provinces. Quebec is not part of this agreement. It should be noted that some items/services that may be covered in BC are not covered outside the province (e.g., prescription drugs, ambulance services).</p> <p>Before you leave BC -- even if you're travelling within Canada -- purchasing private travel health insurance is recommended to supplement your basic coverage. If you have extended health benefits, please contact your insurer to determine the policy provisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain insurance that will cover any additional costs for physician and hospital care, provincial services that are not insured outside BC (e.g., prescription and ambulance services), and transportation back to BC. • For full details, visit the HIBC website on Medical Benefits Outside of BC, or call HIBC (604-683-7151 or 1-800-663-7100). The website includes a helpful brochure called Leaving BC. • See point #6 to learn more about reimbursement from HIBC. <p>Travel outside Canada or to Quebec: Health services provided outside Canada often cost more than the amount paid by the Ministry of Health. The difference can be substantial. Purchasing private travel health insurance is strongly recommended; please refer to the section above for more information.</p> <p>When travelling outside Canada or to Quebec, you must pay the visiting dialysis unit upfront for the cost of your dialysis and medical appointments, tests, or treatments. Costs will differ from place to place, so make sure to ask ahead of time.</p>

<p>□ 6.</p>	<p>If you are travelling outside of BC, here what's you need to know about reimbursement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIBC will reimburse costs for dialysis and other health services up to the amount that providing those services costs in BC (which may be substantially less than the amount charged). You will be required to pay the difference. Call HIBC to learn more about current dialysis and other health service rates in BC (PH: 604-683-7151 or 1-800-663-7100). • Keep all medical receipts and, if possible, organize them by date. Submit to Health Insurance BC (HIBC) with your Out-of-Country Medical Claim form to receive reimbursement. Keep a copy of the reimbursement forms for your records. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have 90 days after each dialysis treatment to seek reimbursement. If a receipt for medical treatment is over 90 days old, HIBC will not reimburse you for it. • If you are travelling for more than 3 months, coordinate with a family member to send your receipts to HIBC every 3 months. This will ensure you meet the HIBC 90-day deadline. • It will take at least 2 to 3 months to receive a refund for your dialysis expenses. Be financially prepared to wait for the refund. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If paying for your dialysis costs upfront will pose a challenge, please talk to your renal social worker. The Kidney Foundation, BC & Yukon Branch also provides interest-free loans of up to \$1,000, which can be repaid on a flexible schedule.
<p>□ 7.</p>	<p>Once you have contacted the visiting dialysis unit, the staff there will contact your home unit for medical documents. Your home unit will arrange for additional tests if needed (e.g. Hepatitis B blood tests).</p>
<p>□ 8.</p>	<p>The visiting dialysis unit will review your medical documents. They will then decide if they can meet your medical/dialysis needs and confirm if a space is available. ONCE THE UNIT HAS CONTACTED YOU, YOU MAY CONFIRM YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS.</p>
<p>□ 9.</p>	<p>Provide your travel dates to the nurse-in-charge and renal social worker at your home unit. Your home unit will coordinate your dialysis dates with the visiting unit.</p>

□ 10. Contact your pharmacy to ensure you will have an adequate medication supply while travelling. Remember to:

- Keep all medications in their original, labelled containers.
- Store your medications in your carry-on luggage.
- Carry a copy of your prescription(s) while travelling.

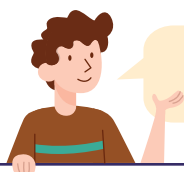
If you are a BC resident travelling **within BC**:

- You will need to bring medications that you take at home with you. Most injectable and intravenous medications will be provided by the visiting unit – check with them to confirm.
- If you use EMLA or another cream to numb your skin prior to needling, bring it with you. If you have lidocaine or another local anesthetic injected under your skin, check with the visiting unit if you need to bring your own.

If you are a BC resident traveling **outside BC or internationally**:

- Bring all the medications you will need with you -- ideally with an extra week or two of supply. Put your medications in your carry-on luggage rather than in checked baggage. This includes injectable and intravenous medications, such as erythropoiesis stimulating agents (e.g., Aranesp, Eprex), iron, and low molecular weight heparin.
- Erythropoiesis stimulating agents must be kept cool (2-8 degrees Celsius, or 36-46 degrees Fahrenheit). Talk to your supplying renal pharmacy (MacDonald's Prescriptions) about the best way to store the medication at the right temperature.
- If you use EMLA or another cream to numb your skin prior to needling, bring it with you. If you have lidocaine or another local anesthetic injected under your skin, check with the visiting unit if you need to bring your own.
- Some medications, dietary supplements, and herbal and homeopathic products legally available in Canada may be illegal in other countries (e.g., cannabis and products with cannabidiol (CBD)). Contact the foreign government office of the country you plan to visit if unsure ([Government of Canada → Foreign Representatives in Canada](#)).
- If you're travelling with a medication that contains a narcotic or controlled drug, contact the country's foreign representatives in Canada for requirements, or see the Canadian government website ([Government of Canada → Travelling into and out of Canada with prescription medications that contain controlled substances](#)).
- If you are travelling for over 3 months, contact your community pharmacy in advance to ensure you have enough medication to last your whole trip. BC PharmaCare coverage for medication travel supply is subject to a limited duration. If you need more than the maximum days' supply, you will need to purchase these medications prior to your trip or arrange for additional supply during your trip. See [BC PharmaCare policies](#) for more.
- You may need a letter from your home dialysis unit to pass through airport security with your syringes and medications. [A standard letter](#) is available for your kidney doctor to sign. Your renal social worker or nurse in charge can help with arranging this.

□ 11.	If you have special requirements, such as sensitivities or allergies to specific dialysis products, check with the visiting unit to see if you should bring your own. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialyzers (you will need enough for each treatment, plus a few spares). • Dialysis needles (you will need enough for each treatment, plus a few spares).
□ 12.	If you do not speak the primary language used at the visiting dialysis unit, consider bringing someone who does for the first run or two. If a translator is not available, bringing a pocket translation guide or practicing some basic phrases/questions is recommended.
□ 13.	Please be flexible. The visiting dialysis unit will make every effort to accommodate your request -- but, if there are scheduling complications, they may need to change the time or location of your treatment. The unit must consider the needs of many patients. You will be notified in advance if any change is required.
□ 14.	Please be aware that care at the visiting HD unit may differ from care at your home HD unit. For examples, the HD machines, chairs/beds, medications when on HD and infection control practices may vary.
□ 15.	The visiting dialysis unit may schedule an appointment for you to meet a kidney doctor prior to your first hemodialysis treatment.
□ 16.	While away, please take all precautions to protect yourself from infection. This includes washing your hands frequently and wearing a mask during travel and when in confined and crowded spaces.
□ 17.	If travelling to a hot climate, be aware of heat illness. Heat illness occurs when your body temperature exceeds your body's ability to drive away the heat. Your body loses fluid by sweating and you can become dehydrated. This causes your heart to beat faster and your blood pressure to drop. People on hemodialysis are more susceptible to heat illness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways to stay cool and stop you losing too much fluid in sweat: • Stay out of the sun at the hottest times of day, between 12 and 3 pm • Avoid sunbathing and stay in the shade and wear a hat • Reduce activity in hot weather (the more activity, the more fluids used) • Be aware of signs of dehydration (peeing less, strong-smelling yellow urine, feeling dizzy or tired) • Talk with your kidney team about the amount of fluid you should be drinking during hot weather • Read Staying Cool in the Summer – Tips for Dialysis Patients
□ 18.	Depending on where you travelled (and for how long), you may need to test for certain infectious diseases upon return to your home dialysis unit (e.g., Hepatitis, HIV, COVID). When receiving dialysis, additional precautions may be required until your test results are available (e.g., dialyzing away from other patients, wearing a mask during dialysis).



**Enjoy your trip, and
safe travels!**