

# Home Hemodialysis Travel Policy



## 1. Background

BC Renal provides extensive coverage to British Columbia residents with kidney disease for renal care-related supplies as well as for medications listed on the BC Renal formulary. Infrequently, a Home Hemodialysis (HHD) patient using the NxStage system will choose to travel with their NxStage machine in the province, or outside of the province or country. An example would be a BC resident HHD patient who wishes to travel within or outside of BC who will need to transport the machine either by car, RV, train, bus or airplane.

## 2. Purpose

To ensure current residents of BC registered as a home hemodialysis patient receive clear instructions about their responsibilities when travelling away from their residence, including international travel.

This policy does not apply to patients who have permanently moved to another province or country.

## 3. Scope

This policy provides HHD travel information to all members of the BC Renal network, including nephrologists and staff of each health authority renal program, where the patient is receiving

home hemodialysis care. This policy applies to any BC resident registered as a home hemodialysis patient in the BC Renal PROMIS system and uses the NxStage machine system while travelling.

The patient must be aware of the following responsibilities below and as outlined in [Appendix A](#). The patient must sign the Home Hemodialysis Patient Agreement for NxStage patients prior to any travel.

## 4. Information to be shared with patients

If the patient is travelling in North America, in most cases, PHSA will provide insurance coverage if the machine is damaged. However, the following conditions at the very least must be met. Patients must abide by all safety precautions to protect the NxStage home hemodialysis machine from loss or damage, including theft. They are required to adhere to the following conditions:

**4.1** Patients travelling with the NxStage machine must obtain the required protective case or use the original box with foam inserts. The hard-shell case is required for air travel and all instances where a carrier operator will handle the machine; the soft case may be used for all other modes of travel.

**4.2** If travelling by train, bus, airplane, or other public transportation, the patient must ensure that carrier operators are aware of the medical device and that precautions are taken to protect it from theft.

**4.3** The machine must not be left unattended for any length of time during travel (i.e. left in a car; or at the airport).

**4.4** The information regarding this policy and the eligibility criteria must be verbally communicated to the patient or the patient's guardian and documented, using the "Home Hemodialysis and Travelling" handout.

The patient, or the patient's guardian, must sign the HHD patient agreement (NxStage) outlining their responsibilities.

The signed agreement will be uploaded and stored in the patient's PROMIS record or kept in the patient chart.

**4.5** BC Renal will not be responsible for costs related to renting a NxStage machine. Each patient is required to cover the costs of travelling with their NxStage machine. BC Renal will cover the costs of shipping dialysate bags, cartridges, drain lines and dialyzers if within Fresenius standard costing prices for domestic and US travel.

All international, international island and cruise travel will require a quote for shipping costs and will be forwarded from Fresenius to BC Renal for approval. BC Renal will cover the cost of shipping the previously mentioned supplies for a maximum of 4 weeks/year per patient.

**4.6** Fresenius provides a customer service phone line for machine issues encountered during travel time. Fresenius will support cycler swaps to any Canadian travel destination within 150 km of a NxStage shipping destination. Fresenius does not support cycler swaps outside of Canada or to international island destinations. For a list of countries in which Fresenius will support shipping supplies, please contact Fresenius travel department.

## 5. Travel Outside of North America

If the patient is travelling outside of North America, it is the responsibility of the patient to obtain property/liability insurance for the machine to cover such travel. A proof of insurance is to be provided to the HHD educator to be kept on file.

# Appendix A: Responsibilities of the Patient, Medical Service Providers and NxStage

## Responsibilities of the Patient

- Check with nephrologist to ensure suitability for travel. Generally, this means the patient is medically stable on home hemodialysis and fistula, graft or permanent central line catheter is functional.
- Communicate with home hemodialysis educator and provide information necessary on the NxStage travel form, including: destination, dates of travel and mode of travel.
  - Patients are required to give at least 60 days' notice prior to requested delivery date for all international travel.
  - Provide at least 30 days' notice for travel in Canada. Some exceptions may apply to domestic travel within Canada, depending on supplier resourcing and extenuating circumstances.
- Organize travel arrangements. Patient must advise the airline that they are travelling with the NxStage machine as medical equipment. Patient is required to travel with NxStage machine. Due to weight, the machine will need to be checked luggage. With note from a doctor and prior notice, Air Canada and WestJet will waive the checked bag fee for one piece of medical equipment.
- Obtain property/liability insurance for the NxStage machine for travel outside of North America. A copy of the insurance will be kept on file in the patient chart.
- Coordinate transportation of the machine and ancillary supplies. Keep a packing list. The patient must cover the costs of transporting NxStage machine, warming unit and ancillary supplies, including heparin, prefilled saline syringes, syringes, needles, gauze, tape, masks, sharps container, cleaning solution, BP cuff, paper drapes or towels, tegos (Central venous catheter - CVC), citrate 4% locking solution (CVC), and dressings (CVC).
- Obtain the required travel protective case. A hard shell case is required for air travel and all instances where a carrier operator will handle the machine; a soft case may be used for all other modes of travel. Both can be borrowed from the local HHD training unit subject to availability.
- If travelling by train, bus, airplane, or other public transportation, ensure that carrier operators are aware of the medical device and that precautions are taken to protect it from theft.
- The machine must not be left unattended for any length of time.
- Keep a copy of the patient travel letter during travels.
- Bring home any unused supplies.
- Manage medications; ensure there is adequate supply and carry all medication on their person. Ensure syringes are protected with needle guards and medications are labelled with prescription information; otherwise, security will not allow them to be brought on board.

- Cover the costs of normal saline shipping if not available by NxStage.
- Ensure there is proper electrical grounding for the cycler power requirements: Input voltage 100–120/ 230 VAC; Auto ranging 50/60 Hz Input; Power 600 VA (200 VA for Cycler; 400 VA for AC outlet). Bring a European adapter if necessary.

**Note:** Refer to the HHD SharePoint site for information on using generators to supply power to the NxStage Cycler. See “Generator Specifications for Use with NxStage – Power Consumption” and “Use of Generator/Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)” for more details.

- Be prepared and take information about travelling with a portable device. Box up and mail additional medical supplies ahead of time or pack all supplies and medications in carry-on luggage.
- If travelling outside of BC, the patient’s nephrologist is not licensed to provide any support. The patient is responsible for seeking appropriate medical support as necessary. Carry information about health, including medical records and recent lab reports, insurance information and a list of medications. Pack medical information in carry-on luggage. Be aware of the nearest emergency department located at the destination.
- It is strongly recommended that patients buy travel health insurance. Ensure insurance covers medical evacuation.

If a medical emergency occurs and

health care outside of BC is required, or if evacuation/return transportation to BC is required, the financial costs may be extremely high.

## Responsibilities of BC Renal, the Patient’s Nephrologist and the HHD Team

- Home hemodialysis educator will contact NxStage and fill out the necessary forms for travel; they will confirm with patient once the forms are completed.
- Nephrologist and HHD team to communicate with patient – ensure patient is medically stable and fistula, graft or CVC is fully functional.
- HHD educator to review “Handout for HHD patients wanting to travel”. Ensure all insurance safety requirements are reviewed and understood.
- BC Renal will cover the costs of shipping cartridges, premixed bagged dialysate, drain lines and warmer disposables if within quoted costs or standard shipping prices as per contract. Saline (1-litre bags) are available for shipping only in those areas in Canada which use the NxStage system\*.
- BC Renal will cover the cost of the travel case. Hard cases are designated for all travel in which a third party will handle the machine (air, rail, bus, cruise) and soft cases for all other travel.
- Designated HHD programs will store hard and soft cases for patient use.

## Responsibilities of NxStage

- Process Fresenius travel form in a timely fashion.
- Fresenius customer service representative will communicate with patient and coordinate the shipping of supplies to travel destination(s), including bags, solutions, dialyzers, cartridges, drain lines, warmer disposables [and normal saline if possible].
- Communicate to BC Renal all shipping quotes outside of standard shipping freight charges for approval.
- Send shipping expense invoice to BC Renal Finance.
- Fresenius will ship to destinations as per the Fresenius travel policy.
- As of March 18, 2018, Fresenius will ship supplies and normal saline to Manitoba, British Columbia, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Newfoundland within 150 km of current courier locations.
- As of March 29, 2017, Fresenius will ship cartridges, drain lines, dialyzers, dialysate bags and tubing to US (including Hawaii and Alaska), United Kingdom (Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, England), Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Italy, France, Singapore, Japan and Philippines.
- As of March 29, 2017, Fresenius does not support shipping to Mexico, Greece, India or China.