

Home Hemodialysis and Travelling

For Patients Living in BC Who Want to Travel (In or Outside BC)

If you are a home hemodialysis patient using the NxStage machine, it is possible to travel. This is a step-by-step guide to help you plan your dialysis care away from home.

Please plan your travel well in advance.

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.

DO NOT BOOK YOUR TRAVEL UNTIL YOU HAVE COMMUNICATED WITH YOUR HOME HEMODIALYSIS EDUCATOR WELL IN ADVANCE OF THESE LEAD TIMES.

- 1. Check with your kidney doctor to make sure you are fit to travel. Generally this means that:**
 - You are medically stable on home hemodialysis.
 - You have a functioning fistula, graft or permanent central line catheter with stable blood flows. Temporary accesses are not accepted.
- 2. Once you decide where you want to go, communicate with your home hemodialysis educator.** You will need to provide information about your travel destination and dates of travel. The NxStage travel document will be completed and faxed to Fresenius customer service. Fresenius will confirm with you if they provide shipping to your destination.
- 3. Arrange your travel plans using the following information in this document.**
- 4. For all travel:**
 - You will be required to take your Nxstage machine on your travels. BC Renal will not cover the costs of renting a NxStage machine.
 - PHSA has property insurance to cover Nxstage machines situated in or while in transit in Canada or the USA. In most cases, PHSA will provide insurance coverage if the machine is damaged or lost; however, the following conditions

(# 4, 5, and 6) 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.*

- If you are travelling outside of North America, you must acquire and show proof of property/liability insurance to cover the Nxstage machine while travelling. Please provide a copy with the HHD educator.
- Travel cases and warming units will be available at your home hemodialysis training unit. Please communicate with your HHD educator to book this equipment. Cover your machine with plastic garbage bag prior to placing in the cases.
- Fresenius will arrange shipping of dialysate bags, drain lines, cartridges and dialyzers. Depending on your destination, these supplies will be shipped directly to your destination or to your home. BC Renal will cover the costs of shipping these supplies up to 4 weeks/year.
- Keep a packing list. You will need to transport all ancillary supplies with you. Your home hemodialysis educator will provide you with a travel letter for airport staff explaining the purpose of the supplies.
- Ensure there is proper electrical grounding at your destination for the cyclor power requirements: Input voltage 100–120/ 230 VAC; Auto ranging 50/60 Hz Input; Power 600 VA (200 VA

for Cyclor; 400 VA for AC outlet). Refer to *Power consumption and the use of generator/ uninterruptable power supply (UPS) info on HHD SharePoint site. Ask your HHD educator to provide a copy of this document.*

- You are responsible for the safe disposal of all sharps while travelling. Please use a hard plastic puncture proof container if necessary.

5. For air, bus or train travel within or outside of Canada:

- You will need a hard travel case to transport your Nxstage machine. You can borrow a travel case from your home hemodialysis unit (subject to availability). Please contact your home hemodialysis educator to book this.
- To protect the machine while in the hard case, please wrap in a garbage bag and place in the case.
- Make advance arrangements with your travel carrier to ensure that they are aware you will be travelling with medical equipment and that precautions are taken to protect it from theft. Due to weight and size, the NxStage machine will need to be checked luggage. With a note from a doctor and prior notice, some air carriers will waive the checked bag fee for one piece of medical equipment.

6. For travel via car or RV within Canada:

- You will need a soft travel case to transport your NxStage machine. You

can borrow a travel case from your home hemodialysis unit, subject to availability. Please contact your HHD educator to book this. You may also use the original NxStage box, with foam inserts, to travel via car or RV.

- If travelling by car, the machine must not be left in the car unattended for any length of time.
- The Nxstage machine must be kept in a safe location to protect it from theft.

7. It is strongly recommended that you buy travel health insurance. Make sure your insurance covers medical evacuation. The financial costs may be extremely high if you have a medical emergency that requires health care outside of BC or if you need to be transported back home.

8. If you are travelling outside of BC, your nephrologist is not licensed to provide any clinical support to you. You are responsible to seek appropriate medical support as necessary. You will need information about your health, including your medical records and recent lab reports, insurance information and a list of the medications you take. Secure your medical information in your carry-on luggage.

9. Keep a current medication list with you and all the medication you will need with you. Talk to your pharmacy to make sure you will have enough medication while you travel. Ensure syringes are protected with needle guards and medications are labelled with prescription information.

- Ask your home dialysis unit to give you a travel letter so you can go through security with your syringes and medications.

10. Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) provides information to help with planning trips with medical equipment.

- For more information, read “Planning your trip” and “Tips for passengers with medically necessary equipment”. These documents are located on the CATSA website: [Catsa-acsta.gc.ca/en/special-needs#planning](https://catsa-acsta.gc.ca/en/special-needs#planning)

Tips for travelling with NxStage machine and related supplies

1. It is recommended to carry a travel letter confirming that you are on dialysis and use supplies and medications that you are bringing in your carry-on luggage. This letter is not absolutely required in Canada but would likely be needed for international travel.
2. Be prepared to present these items to officials when going through security screening as they are required to examine them.
3. Ask the hotel if they will waive the fee for accepting and storing boxes with medical supplies.
4. Ask the hotel ahead of time for a bathroom scale. Many have them, so you don't have to take one with you.

5. **If you have dietary restrictions, remember that many airlines do not provide meals, and airport shops and restaurants may not have healthy food options.** When making your airline reservation, be sure to ask if the airline has special meals, such as diabetic, vegetarian or low-fat options. It is advisable to bring your own diet – appropriate food and snacks for travel delays and long trips.
6. Dialyze just before you leave if possible so there is more time to recover from any delays on your trip. (late supply delivery, delayed flights etc.)

Normal Saline Options for Patients Travelling Abroad

In most cases, you will be required to take normal saline to their destination, with the exception of Italy, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands.

Normal Saline

NxStage will supply Normal Saline to Canadian destinations only.

Normal Saline Options for US Travel

If patients are travelling within the US, they can transport their own normal saline to their destination (shipping costs to be covered by the patient).

Dialysis Supplies Required for Travel

You will be required to take all ancillary supplies with you on your trip. The shipping of these supplies will be your responsibility. Supplies required for dialysis may include:

- Fistula needles
- Syringes
- Tape
- Gauze
- Antiseptic Wipes
- Small Sharps Disposal – can purchase at drug store – retails for approx. \$4.99.
- Disposable drapes
- Heparin
- Needles
- BP cuff
- Scale
- CVC supplies – syringes, prefilled NS, 4% citrate locking solution, dressings
- Other patient specific dialysis supplies

Miscellaneous Notes/Info

Air Canada Medical Info
1-800-667-4732
CATSA 1-888-294-2202

Department of Transport (U.S.)

1-866-289-9673

The U.S. Dep't of Transport has stated that:

1. **Your machine is an “assistive device”**
(Section 382.3).
2. **The airline must let you bring your machine on the plane or check it.**
(382.121(a)).
3. **Your machine does not count toward a carry-on bag limit** (382.121(b)).
4. **If you pre-board and check your machine, it takes priority over other bags if space is tight** (382.123(a)).
5. **The airline cannot charge you a fee for your machine in the cabin or as checked luggage** (382.31(a)).
6. **Your machine must be portable (~ 100 lbs. or less with the case)** (382.1(c)).
7. **If the airline loses or harms your machine in the US, baggage liability limits do not apply.** They must pay for your machine based on its price (382.31). NOTE: Out of the US, the limit is \$1,685. Check to see if your homeowner's insurance would pay if your machine is lost or damaged, or if the clinic covers this.
8. **The airline must let you bring your medicines, syringes, and dialysate (382.2), but only a 1–2 day supply of fluids.** Any more and you will need to ship it. For more information, refer to: [Portable Dialysis Machine Notice](#).