

## **Traveling with a child who has epilepsy**

Safe travel starts with planning before you leave home. Tips for travel include:

### **Plan in advance**

- Call the airline and explain your needs. Ask what accommodations they provide. Ask about rules for carry on medicines.
- If you are going to theme parks or other places, call and ask what help they can provide.
- Pick out snacks, books or toys with your child to help them enjoy the trip.
- Carry a list of phone numbers you may need. Include your child's:
  - Primary care provider.
  - Neurology provider.
  - Pharmacist.
  - Emergency family contact who knows your child's medical history.
  - Nearest pharmacy and hospital where you will be traveling.

### **Medicine**

- Get prescriptions refilled 1 to 2 weeks before the start of your vacation. Be sure to pick them up before you leave so you have enough to take with you.
- If needed, call your insurance company to see if they will give you advance doses so you will not run out.
- If flying, carry 2 supplies of medicines with you. Put one in your carry-on and the other in your checked baggage. If your child uses Diastat®, keep it in your carry-on bag.
- Carry a list of medicines and doses. This is called a Home Medication List.
- Bring your home pharmacy phone number. If needed, they may be able to help you with insurance issues at a new pharmacy.
- If your child is not using a rescue medicine now, such as Diastat®, call your nurse or doctor to see if it is needed for the trip.



### **Emergency care**

- Get a current emergency care plan signed by your care provider. Carry it with you.
- Have your child wear a medical bracelet or necklace stating that they have epilepsy. Also list any allergies on the bracelet/necklace.
- Everyone traveling with your child should know seizure first aid. Know what to do and what not to do during a seizure. Everyone should also know how to describe the seizures.

## **Vagal Nerve Stimulator**

- Carry the registration card with you. You may need it at the airport.
- When you go through a security screening at the airport or another location (amusement park, tourist attraction, etc.), ask to have your child manually searched. This will help make sure your child does not set off the security screening device.

## **Ketogenic Diet**

- Ask to have a refrigerator put in your hotel room to store special diet foods.
- Make enough meals to have on hand during the time that you are traveling. Plan extra meals in case you are delayed for any reason. Be sure to take an insulated carrier and enough cooling packs to keep food safe.
- For travel out of the country, get a letter from the doctor so you can carry these special foods with you.

## **At your destination**

- Check for the location and phone number of a pharmacy and hospital near you.
- Call ahead for advance seating at restaurants and local attractions.
- Have a hospital bag put together ahead of time so that you will have everything that you need. Include a change of clothes, money, the emergency care plan and notes about your child's care.
- If you need to visit the Emergency Room, these tips may help make it a smooth visit:
  - Carry an emergency care plan signed by your care provider. The plan should include the doses of emergency medicines out for your child's weight.
  - Bring notes on what has been done in the past to control your child's seizures. Include information on what has **not** worked for your child.
  - Be an advocate. You know your child's care best.
  - Bring your care provider's contact information with you.

Now that you have planned ahead and are prepared for your trip, enjoy the small pleasures and joys of being away from home!

**This information was adapted from materials available through the Wisconsin Seizure Control Network.**

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**