

Frequently Asked Questions

A patient's guide to traveling with an implanted device.

Rest, rejuvenation and relaxation are keys to a healthy life. Thanks to advancements in device technology, leisure activities, such as traveling, have become increasingly safe and manageable for people with implanted devices. With some planning, and extra care and consideration, you can safely enjoy vacationing at the destination of your choosing.

Should I consult my doctor if I am planning a trip?

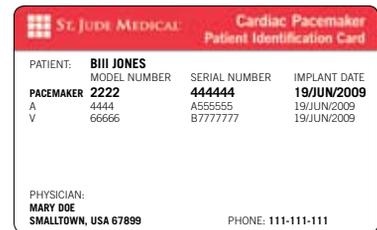
It is a good idea to talk to your doctor about your travel plans. He or she can make sure that there are no outstanding medical issues or restrictions of which you should be aware. Also, he or she can provide you with documentation you may need and provide advice as to how to manage your care while away from home.



What do I need to take with me when I travel?

There are some essential items that you should always have with you as you travel:

- **Implantable Device Patient Identification (ID) Card.** Make sure that you have your patient ID card with you at all times, as it documents the presence of your device and provides additional important information about your system type.



- **Other important medical information.** Ask your doctor for a printout of your programmed settings, and carry this with your ID card. Your doctor should also be able to provide you with an emergency medical information sheet that contains pertinent contact names and numbers, plus information about how to care for you in case an emergency arises. A listing of medications you are currently taking and their dosages may also be helpful. A page at the back of this pamphlet has been provided for these types of notes. Medical identification jewelry can also be helpful.

You should also ask your physician for a copy of the final printout from the programmer associated with the testing results and settings at the most recent evaluation. If you are going to a Spanish, French or German speaking country, your physician might also be able to give you a printout in the language of the country you will visit.

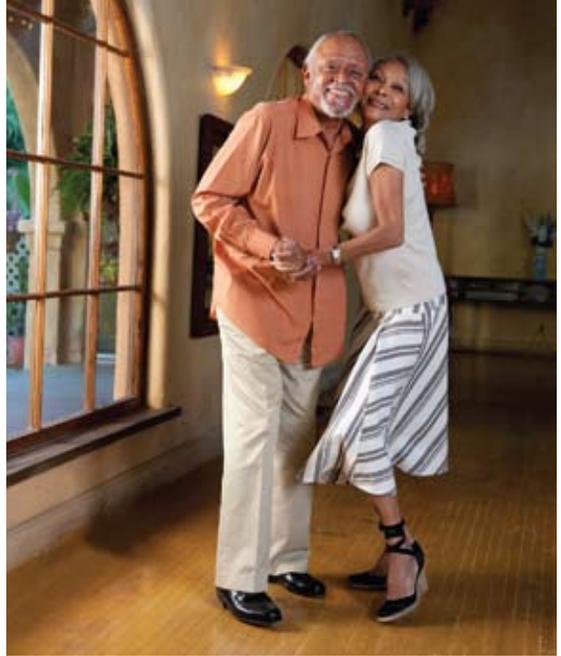
- **Medications.** Remember to carry with you an adequate supply of your medications. If you are traveling by plane, train or bus, it is a good idea to keep some medications with you in your carry-on luggage and in your suitcase. It also might be wise to take a medication supply for about one week longer than you plan to stay in case of unforeseen circumstances. Additionally, a photocopy of your prescriptions as written by your doctor may help to confirm which medications you are taking. Moreover, you can use it to replenish your medications at a pharmacy in the place you are visiting should your supply be lost or damaged.

Should I be concerned about traveling by air with an implanted device?

Many people with implanted devices are concerned about air travel. In most cases, however, from the standpoint of your heart health, it is perfectly safe. It is always a good idea to check with your doctor as you plan your travels to see if he or she has any recommendations.

Will airport security systems damage my device? Will my device set off the alarm or interfere with aviation navigation equipment?

Airport security systems will not damage your device; however, you do not want to linger too long near the metal detector (no more than 15 seconds is recommended). The best thing to do is to walk through at a normal pace. If the alarm sounds (it may or may not), it only means that the system detected the metal in your device. If this happens, present your patient ID card or a letter of documentation from your doctor and ask for a hand pat-down search.



Security personnel may use a handheld wand. If so, it is important that you ask them to perform the search quickly and to avoid holding the wand over your implanted device for more than a second. Also know that your device will not interfere with aviation navigation equipment.

Are there special considerations for me while in flight?

If you are on a very long flight, make sure you walk the aisles every couple of hours or so. You can also do some simple exercises involving leg and foot movement. These activities will help you keep your blood circulating. Also make sure you drink plenty of water (make provisions for this given possible security restrictions). Some recommendations state you should drink one glass of bottled water for each hour of flight. Avoid alcoholic drinks or caffeinated coffee and colas. Dehydration is common on airplanes due to air conditioning. In extreme cases, dehydration

can lead to an imbalance of electrolytes, which are important solutions that conduct electricity in the heart. Electrolyte imbalance can contribute to arrhythmias.

What should I think about if I am traveling by car or RV?

Vacationing by car or recreational vehicle (RV) can be quite enjoyable, allowing you to travel at your own pace and visit out-of-the-way places. Plan your route carefully, and make sure you give a copy of your travel plans to a loved one in case you encounter difficulties while on the road.

Also, you never want to be completely out of reach of help should you need it. A cell phone can be handy, and device recipients can use them safely with a few simple precautions. Do not carry the phone in a breast pocket over the pacemaker and use it at the ear opposite the implanted device. If you are relying on your cell phone while traveling, it may be a good idea to check with your cell phone provider as to coverage in the areas you plan to travel.

Is a cruise a good idea?

A cruise can be a great getaway, and most ships have all the services you may need, including a doctor on board to assist you

if you have problems. There are many organizations that offer group cruises for people with implanted devices. You can contact the cruise line, search the Internet or check with a travel agent for information about these specialized packages.

Can I participate in strenuous activities like hiking, skiing or jogging?

Typically, people with implanted devices can continue to lead active lives. You should be able to participate in the types of activities you engaged in before you received your device; however, it is always best to discuss your plans with your doctor. He or she can advise you as to your limits or signs that you might be engaging in activities that are too strenuous. Truthfully, your energy level may increase after you receive your device, and many people find they are able to do more physically than they were before because their symptoms have improved. If you participate in a particular activity that affects your chest or arm (shooting or archery, for example), you might want to discuss this with your doctor before receiving your device. It may affect how the device is selected, and where and how it is implanted.

What about my specialized diet?

Generally, travel providers are willing to accommodate special food needs and offer healthy choices upon request, such as vegetarian meals. Cruise ships generally offer a variety of foods, and more and more restaurants are featuring heart-healthy items on their menus. This makes it easy to choose fruits and vegetables, as well as main dishes prepared with reduced amounts of oils, sugars and cream sauces.



What if I need medical attention when I am away from home?

Your physician should be able to provide you with a contact at your destination in case you need immediate medical attention while traveling. Because your physician knows your medical condition, it is best to ask him or her what you should do if you have a problem while away from home.

If you have an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) or a cardiac resynchronization therapy defibrillator (CRT-D), ask your doctor to help you formulate a plan in the event you receive a shock while you are away.

Generally, if you receive a single shock and have no symptoms, you can call your physician at your convenience. If you have symptoms, more immediate action may be required.

For some devices, a unique remote monitoring system may be available. These types of systems enable you to send information about your condition and your device to your doctor or clinic using the phone line.

Above all, it is important to discuss your condition and care with your traveling companions and have a plan in place, just in case you need help.

What if I am going to be away for an extended period of time (e.g., months)?

In this case, talk to your physician who may be able to suggest physicians in the area that you will be living while away from home. If you plan to alternate between your primary home and this second home, it might be reasonable for you to see the physician in that area early in your trip, so that the physician will know you in case of an emergency.

Are there any other things I should consider with regard to traveling?

If you are monitored remotely via St. Jude Medical systems, you might want to take your bedside transmitter with you when you travel, especially if you plan to be away for an extended period of time.

Reduce the stress of traveling with an implanted device by planning ahead and making sure you have what you need for your care. Then, contribute to your own health through rest and relaxation.

Important Information

Implantable device manufacturer:

Device make and model number:

Implanting physician:

Implanting physician phone number:

Implantation date:

Hospital where implant was performed:

Attending physician:

Attending physician phone number:

Medications:

Name

Dosage

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Travel checklist:

Patient ID card

Printout of device settings

Medications

