Can I Travel with TPN?

For Patients in the British Columbia Home Parenteral Nutrition Program
You can travel with TPN! The biggest thing to know about travelling when you need total parenteral nutrition (TPN) is that you are responsible for all the aspects of your trip. This pamphlet is intended to outline what is involved in planning a trip and what you need to consider.

When you travel

- Make sure your plans meet your needs for your TPN.
- Be prepared to handle all risks related to travelling (such as problems with your health, your solutions, your equipment, or the supply of your solutions or equipment).
- Have a back-up plan in place in case something goes wrong.
- We suggest you think about buying travel medical insurance. Make sure this insurance covers ‘all pre-existing’ medical conditions.
- Do not finalize your travel plans until you have made sure that all your TPN needs can be met.
**Do I need to ask anyone if it is okay to travel?**

You need to know whether or not you are healthy enough to travel.

- If you are new to the British Columbia Home Parenteral Nutrition (B.C. HPN) Program, **or**

- If your condition has changed since you last traveled,
  - contact the B.C. HPN Program or your family doctor.

At least **four weeks before** you go away:

- Let us know that you are going away.

- Give us an address and phone number where you can be reached at your travel destination in case of an emergency.

**Note:** Travelling outside of Canada? Give us at least six weeks notice.

**When I travel, can I continue to be a patient in the B.C. HPN Program?**

You remain in the B.C. HPN Program while you are away if you meet **all** of these criteria:

- You continue to have your main home (residence) in British Columbia.

- You are gone for less than 6 months within a calendar year.

- You qualify for ongoing Medical Services Plan coverage with Health Insurance BC.
How do I know if I qualify for ongoing medical coverage?

The Medical Services Plan of B.C. outlines what it means to qualify for coverage during a ‘Temporary Absence from British Columbia’.

Your basic provincial health care coverage may not cover all health care costs when travelling out of the province. It may only cover part of the cost of seeing a doctor or a hospital stay and mainly when travelling within Canada.

Check with Health Insurance BC to find out if you qualify for a ‘Temporary Absence from British Columbia’.
Telephone: 1-800-663-7100
Web: http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/infoben/leavingbc.html

Whether or not you qualify for ongoing medical coverage, we suggest you think about buying travel medical insurance as well.

In addition to your basic provincial health care coverage, our Program may cover the costs for your solution, supplies, and service charges. Usually, this is only if:

• You are travelling within Canada.
• The cost is the same amount as what it would cost if you were still “at home in B.C.”.
• You are gone for less than six months during one calendar year.

If costs are more than the amount normally paid by our Program, you are billed directly for the added costs.

Where will my solution and supplies come from?

Our program only works with a company called Calea to provide you with your solutions and supplies.

If you wish to use another supplier that is not associated with Calea, then you must let us know, talk to us about your prescription, and pay for your solutions, supplies, and equipment yourself.
**Planning for travel**

You can order up to 30 days of solution and supplies but you must give us and Calea at least four weeks notice. If you are going to be away longer than one month, you need to arrange to have your next month’s supplies and solutions sent to you or return home to pick it up.

Let Calea know your travel plans, such as how and when you are travelling. They will package your solution and supplies properly for the type of travel. Calea may package your solutions in a cooler with ice packs. If they do, then these solutions must be placed in a refrigerator within 48 hours from the time it was packaged in the cooler. Calea should let you know if there are any extra costs. If they do not, make sure you ask.

Contact your travel agent, hotel, cruise ship, and airline. Tell them about your medical needs. Work with them to make sure that they can meet your needs. You may need to give extra time for them to make the needed arrangements.

Examples of special needs:

- Extra weight of luggage.
- ‘Fragile, medical supply’ labels for luggage.
- Keep TPN cold during travel (like an extra refrigerator in your hotel room – bar fridges are too small).
- Space to set up and prepare for hooking up and unhooking.
- Exceptions at security checkpoints for your solutions, supplies, and equipment.

You may be asked to provide a travel letter that supports your need for these extra arrangements. You can ask us for a letter that explains why you require these special arrangements. Carry all of your letters and documents with you at all times.

If you are going to be away for more than a month, think about locating a health professional where you are staying, in case you need medical care. You may also need to get blood tests done while away.
If you are flying:

- Carry at least two days of solution and supplies, as well as your pump, in the cabin of the airplane as carry-on luggage. This is in case you have a long flight delay or your checked solution or supplies gets damaged or lost.

- Make sure you use these two bags within 48 hours from the time you took them out of the refrigerator.

- Carry travel letters or other documents with you. You may need to show these to:
  - help reduce any delays you may have at security.
  - allow you to carry on more baggage than the limit.

- Contact your airline’s customer service to talk about:
  - any cargo restrictions they have for size and weight of your checked and carry-on baggage.
  - your need for your solution to be refrigerated in the luggage compartment (if not packaged in a cooler).
  - your need for special handling and marking of your baggage.
  - whether they will reduce the ‘excess baggage fee’ if you give them travel letters explaining the medical need for the solutions, supplies and equipment in your baggage.

Plan ahead! Make sure you give everyone enough notice to make any special arrangements.
You need to give at least:

- four (4) weeks notice for travel anywhere in Canada.
- six (6) weeks notice for travel outside of Canada.

If you don’t give enough notice, you may be charged for any added costs for preparing solutions, supplies, equipment or travel letters on short notice.

What if I can’t bring everything I need with me?
If you feel it will be difficult for you to travel with enough solution or you are concerned your solution could expire before you use it, other arrangements might be possible, depending on where you are going.
A. If travelling in Canada

If you are not able to travel with more than a week’s supply of solution and supplies, Calea will work with you to try and arrange for you to get your solutions and supplies where you are staying.

- If there is a Calea branch office near to where you will be located, Calea will arrange for your solution and supplies to come from this branch office. This branch office would then deliver your solution and supplies to you.
- Calea needs at least four weeks notice to arrange for a branch office to handle your order.
- You need to have a doctor in the province you are travelling to write a prescription for your solution. You need to locate a doctor who will do this for you. This may not be possible, so you will also need to look at other ways to get your solutions and supplies while away.
- You must pay any delivery costs that are over and above what it would cost to deliver your solutions and supplies if you were at home. You can arrange to pay this amount through Calea’s Customer Service Representative.

B. If travelling outside of Canada

Calea may be able get your TPN solutions prepared by a pharmacy in another country but only if that pharmacy is connected to Calea’s parent company. There are very few countries where this is the case and so it should rarely be considered as an option. Even if there is a partner company in a country, that company may not be able to meet your specific needs. However, if you are going to a country where there is a partner company to Calea’s parent company:

- Calea needs at least six weeks notice to see if this can be arranged. (If you are travelling to the United States, Calea only needs four weeks notice.)
- Take all your necessary supplies with you.
- You need a doctor in the location you are travelling to write a prescription for your solution. You need to locate a doctor who will do this for you. This may not be possible, so you will also need to look at other ways to get your solutions and supplies while away.
If travelling outside of Canada, continued

• Our Program will cover the costs up to the amount that this same service would cost in British Columbia. You must pay any costs that are over and above what we would cover. You can arrange to pay this amount through Calea’s Customer Service Representative.

Remember...
Your basic provincial health care coverage:

• is limited to travel within Canada.

• only covers visits to a doctor, or hospital stays.

This is only if you qualify for ‘Temporary Absence from British Columbia’ coverage.

The B.C. HPN Program will only pay for solutions and supplies when arranged through Calea. Our Program only covers costs up to the amount that this same service would cost in British Columbia.

Travel Check List

I am leaving on ______________ (date).
I will be away for ___________ days.
I will need _________ bags of solution.

☐ Let the B.C. HPN Program and Calea know I am planning to go away, when and for how long.

☐ Get a quote from Calea for any extra costs.

☐ Order solution and supplies from Calea.

☐ Check to see if my B.C. Medical Services Plan will cover me while I am away.

☐ Buy travel medical insurance.

☐ Notify: ☐ Travel agent
☐ Hotel
☐ Cruise ship
☐ Airline

☐ Ask for travel letter from:
☐ B.C. HPN Program
☐ My doctor

☐ If I need blood tests while away, ask for a new requisition from the Program.

☐ Find a health professional in the location I am travelling to.
(In case I need medical help)