



Travelling and Asthma

With some planning and preparation, most people with asthma can travel safely and comfortably.

Four to six weeks ahead

Arrange a check-up with your doctor or healthcare team to make sure your asthma is well controlled before travelling. During this visit you can:

- Review your written Asthma Action Plan
- Discuss how your asthma has been recently
- Check your device technique
- Ensure your immunisations are up to date (including flu and other recommended vaccines for your travel plans)
- Discuss your destination and planned activities (e.g. hot or cold climates, hiking, skiing)
- Ask about managing asthma on long flights or across time zones and access to care

- Request a doctor's letter summarising your asthma, treatment and the generic names and doses of your medicines
- Ask for extra prescriptions in case you need to replace any medicines while away

Travel insurance and documents

Travel insurance is important should you become unwell or injured while travelling. It can help cover unexpected medical or hospital expenses.

When completing the travel insurance questionnaire, make sure you declare asthma as a pre-existing medical condition, along with any other health conditions.

If a condition is not declared, your policy may not cover related medical costs.



Compare policies carefully and keep copies of your insurance details and emergency contact numbers with you, both in print and on your phone.

One week before you travel

Preparing for your trip

- Make sure you have enough medicine for your entire trip, plus extra in case of delays
- Check expiry dates and replace medicines that are close to expiring
- Keep medicines in their original packaging with the pharmacy label attached
- Prepare copies of your prescriptions and your doctor's letter
- Set phone reminders so you don't miss daily doses when routines or time zones change
- Look up and save local emergency phone numbers

If you are flying, keep essential medicines in your hand luggage within easy reach, with spares in checked luggage (in case a bag is lost):

- Reliever inhaler
- Preventer medicines
- Spacer (and mask attachment if your child uses one)
- Written Asthma Action Plan
- Allergy and other required medicines
- Doctor's letter and prescriptions
- Hand sanitiser and tissues

While travelling

Managing triggers away from home

Everyone's triggers are different. Common triggers include allergens (dust, mould, pet dander, pollen), temperature changes, smoke (e.g. from cigarettes or bushfires), exercise and respiratory infections.

To help manage triggers while travelling:

- Carry your reliever at all times
- Take your preventer medicine as prescribed
- Ask for freshly laundered bedding at accommodation
- Check weather, pollen and air pollution forecasts; wear an N95 mask if air quality is poor
- Warm up and cool down before exercise
- Take regular breaks and stay hydrated on long journeys
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Inform airlines and accommodation providers if you have food allergies in advance



Tips for warm climates

- Store medications away from heat
- Plan activities in the morning or evening to avoid the hottest part of the day
- Use air conditioning and fans to stay cool
- Avoid sudden temperature changes
- Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated

Tips for cold climates

- Warm up before spending time outdoors
- Dress warmly and cover your mouth and nose in cold air
- Consider indoor activities such as yoga or indoor swimming to reduce exposure to cold, dry air

If symptoms worsen

- Follow your Asthma Action Plan
- Use your reliever inhaler as directed
- Seek urgent medical help if symptoms do not improve

Sources:

1. National Asthma Council Australia. *Travel insurance - the fine print.* 2026.
2. National Asthma Council Australia. *Asthma winter checklist.* 2026.
3. National Asthma Council Australia. *Travelling and holidays.* 2026.
4. 1 Cover Travel Insurance. *Asthma and Travel Insurance.* 2026.

How we can help

Respiratory Care WA has a team of respiratory healthcare professionals here to provide information and support for Western Australians living with asthma and COPD. We offer in-person education and support at our respiratory hubs or via telehealth. Our team can also visit schools, workplaces or community and sporting groups to deliver free asthma management sessions.

Email ask@respiratorycarewa.org.au to find out more.