

Heart disease doesn't take a holiday

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Don't forget to take your meds with you when you travel, expert says.

(HealthDay)—People with heart disease should take a number of precautions if they travel over the Thanksgiving holiday, an expert suggests.

The first step is to be as well-prepared on your trip as you are at home, said Dr. Winston Gandy Jr., a [cardiologist](#) at Piedmont Heart Institute in Atlanta.

"Make sure when you travel that you have your medicine," Gandy said in an American Heart Association news release.

Some people carry a copy of their original prescriptions in case they lose their medications, but having a list of your medications and your cardiologist's phone number should be sufficient. It's also a good idea to tell your cardiologist where you'll be.

"Chances are your cardiologist is going to know someone there, either personally or by reputation," who can provide you with help if needed, Gandy said.

Research medical facilities at your destination, and know what your health insurance covers. For example, some policies pay part of the cost of an emergency flight from another country. That type of information can help you make quick decisions in the event of a medical crisis, he explained.

Some insurers recommend [heart failure](#) patients take their relevant medical records with them when they travel, Gandy said.

Long periods of time sitting in an airplane can increase the risk of [blood clots](#) in the legs, and this risk is higher among heart failure patients. During a long flight, get up and walk around whenever possible.

Tell your cardiologist about your travel plans in order to get their advice about what precautions you might need to take. For example, some patients may require compression stockings or additional oxygen, while others may need to avoid alcohol or keep close track of their fluid intake. Some patients may be told they shouldn't fly, Gandy said.

Special care may be needed when traveling to [high altitudes](#), exotic locations or developing countries, he added. In particular, beware of signs or symptoms such as shortness of breath, which may indicate that the heart is working extra hard.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [heart failure](#).

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