

Be Prepared



# Allergies

If you suffer from allergies, you likely know exactly what you need to do at home to minimize exposure to triggers. Now imagine yourself in an entirely new environment where the air quality, food and climate are very different. That's a challenge – but not one you have to manage alone.

Cigna Global Health Benefits has prepared this checklist of things to do before you go – and to watch out for while on assignment.



## Before you go.

### **Make an appointment with your doctor.**

Before your next doctor's appointment, do a little research on your assignment location and how it may impact your allergies. Make a list and then share it with your doctor. Come up with an action plan together.

### **Ask for 6-12 months' worth of prescriptions.**

Many of Cigna's plans cover up to one year of prescriptions. If yours does, ask for prescriptions for both medications and medical devices like inhalers. And don't forget about over-the-counter medications.

### **Educate yourself on the medications you take.**

Use [CignaEnvoy.com](https://www.cignaenvoy.com) to find out the generic and local brand names of your medications. Then find out if the medications you take are available in your assignment country. If not, Cigna can help you out.

### **Transportation tips.**

When you're traveling to your assignment – or at any time – keep prescriptions in their original containers to minimize potential issues with airport security and customs. If you are traveling with an Epi-pen, take a copy of your prescription with you.

## Food allergies.

### **A little precaution. Lots of local cuisine.**

Before traveling, do some research on the local cuisine. Find out what some of the most common dishes are – and if they contain things you are allergic to. You'll be one step ahead when you arrive.

### **Flash your knowledge.**

If you don't speak the language in your new location, bring translation "allergy flashcards" that



# Find a doctor.

you can show to restaurant staff, hotel managers, open air market vendors and anyone else you are buying food from. Go to [SelectWisely.com](http://SelectWisely.com) or [DietaryCard.com](http://DietaryCard.com) to order them.

## Check the labels.

Laws on food labeling vary from country to country. Before buying packaged food, show your “allergy flashcards” to someone who works at the store.

## Be specific. Every time.

When eating out, be sure to let your server know what you are allergic to. Even if the food you order doesn't contain anything you are allergic to, ask how the food is prepared. Cross-contamination can trigger an allergic reaction just as easily.

## Turn to Cigna for help anytime.

When you arrive in your assignment location, find a local doctor quickly by using the provider directory on [CignaEnvoy.com](http://CignaEnvoy.com). Tell him or her about your allergies and any other medical conditions. And be sure to locate the nearest hospitals and pharmacies while you're online.

Of course, you can reach out to the International Service Center with any question, any issue, anytime. Simply call the number on the back of your Cigna ID card or send a secure e-mail through [CignaEnvoy.com](http://CignaEnvoy.com).

# Respiratory allergies.

## The air you breathe.

Poor air quality can be a very difficult thing to manage. When choosing a home in your new location, try to get one away from factories, farms and industrial plants. Consider living outside of a densely populated city.

## Know before you go.

Want to know the air quality in the region you'll be moving to before you choose a place to live? [AIRNow.gov](http://AIRNow.gov) can be a big help. Just go to [airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=topics.world](http://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=topics.world) to view the latest reports from locations all over the world.

## Check the weather.

Another way to arm yourself with information is to check the average temperatures, humidity, ozone levels and pollen counts for the region you're traveling to.

## Inside isn't always better.

Much like you do at home, check your home and car regularly for cat and dog dander, dust mites and mold spores. And in many countries, it is still more socially acceptable to smoke. Keep your home smoke-free and avoid it in public.

Flying with respiratory allergies? To minimize the impact of “airplane air,” breathe through your nose to humidify and warm the air before it reaches your lungs.



## More Tips

- If you have food allergies, pack your own snacks and meals when traveling. If you must order food, ask about its ingredients.
- Ask your doctor if you should increase your medication dosages based on where you'll be living.
- If you have an Epi-pen, always take it with you. You never want to be caught in an unfamiliar place without one.
- Skin allergies? Research the stinging insects and poisonous plants that are found in your location. Your risk could be much higher.



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