



## Patients Sending or Travelling with Medications Outside of Canada

### Mailing Medications Outside of Canada

The patient or patient's agent is responsible for sending medications to destinations outside of Canada. The following information was obtained from the Customs and Border Protection website with regards to mailing prescriptions to the United States.

As a general rule, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not allow prescription medications to be mailed to the U.S. However, if an individual is there temporarily and needs to have their prescription medication sent, the following process should be followed:

1. Ask their physician to write a letter explaining that they are under their care, and that they have prescribed the drugs for their use.
2. The letter should also explain the circumstances for sending the drugs to them, including that they are a Canadian citizen, that they are temporarily in the U.S. (for travel, study, etc.) and have either run out of their medications, lost them, etc.
3. The letter should accompany the package and be addressed to a CBP Officer or broker. It is strongly recommend that it be in English.
4. It is very important that the outside package be marked with a statement that the package contains a physician's letter so that the CBP Officer will be more proactive in bringing it to the FDA's attention.

If the medicine is sent through the mail, it could be informally detained by CBP until an FDA Inspector is available to examine it. This can take as long as a month. A better option is to send the package by a courier service. Ask the courier service how best to flag the package so that their U.S. Customs broker will be able to tell the FDA about the special circumstances for sending the package. For more information please contact the FDA Import/Export Team at (301) 827-8930 or the Customs and Border Protection website at [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov).

Prescriptions cannot be mailed to US citizens. Under no circumstances can narcotics be mailed into the United States. United States customs officials have the right to seize and destroy ALL contents of a package containing a banned drug. Therefore, if regular medication is included in a package with a narcotic, the entire contents of the package may be destroyed due to the presence of the narcotic.

The above information has been confirmed by an Import Specialist at US Customs in Pembina, North Dakota.

### Travelling with Medications Outside of Canada

Pharmacists should advise their patients travelling outside of Canada to ensure they take enough medication with them to cover the duration of their stay to avoid any inconvenience. Patients may be wise to take slightly more medication with them than their length of stay in case of unexpected delays in returning to Canada. A maximum of three month's supply of medication

is allowed by United States customs to be transported while travelling to the United States. Any quantities greater than this has the potential to be seized by the United States Customs and Border Protection.

Patients should always keep medicines in their original prescription containers with the original labels and write down the following information and keep it with them:

- Medical conditions and corresponding medications;
- When the medication is taken (morning, afternoon, evening);
- How the medicine is taken (by mouth, on the skin, etc.);
- Primary care doctors address, phone number, "on-call number," and hours of operation;
- A copy of the prescriptions, including the name, phone number and address of the pharmacy, in case carry-on items or luggage are lost or stolen.

Pharmacists should also inform patients to never pack medicines in their checked luggage. It is best to put them in a "Travel Kit" in their carry-on bag. This is to ensure that the medications are with them in case their luggage is lost. They are also kept at a controlled temperature and can be taken at the correct times. Ensure other supplies such as blood testing supplies, snack foods, fast acting sugar, etc. are also recommended to be included in the travel kit.

Canadian citizens carrying narcotic prescription medication into the United States are advised to also carry a letter from their physician to attest to their treatment with the medication.

For more information when providing recommendations for travelling with medical conditions or special needs, consult the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority website at: [www.catsa-acsta.gc.ca](http://www.catsa-acsta.gc.ca).