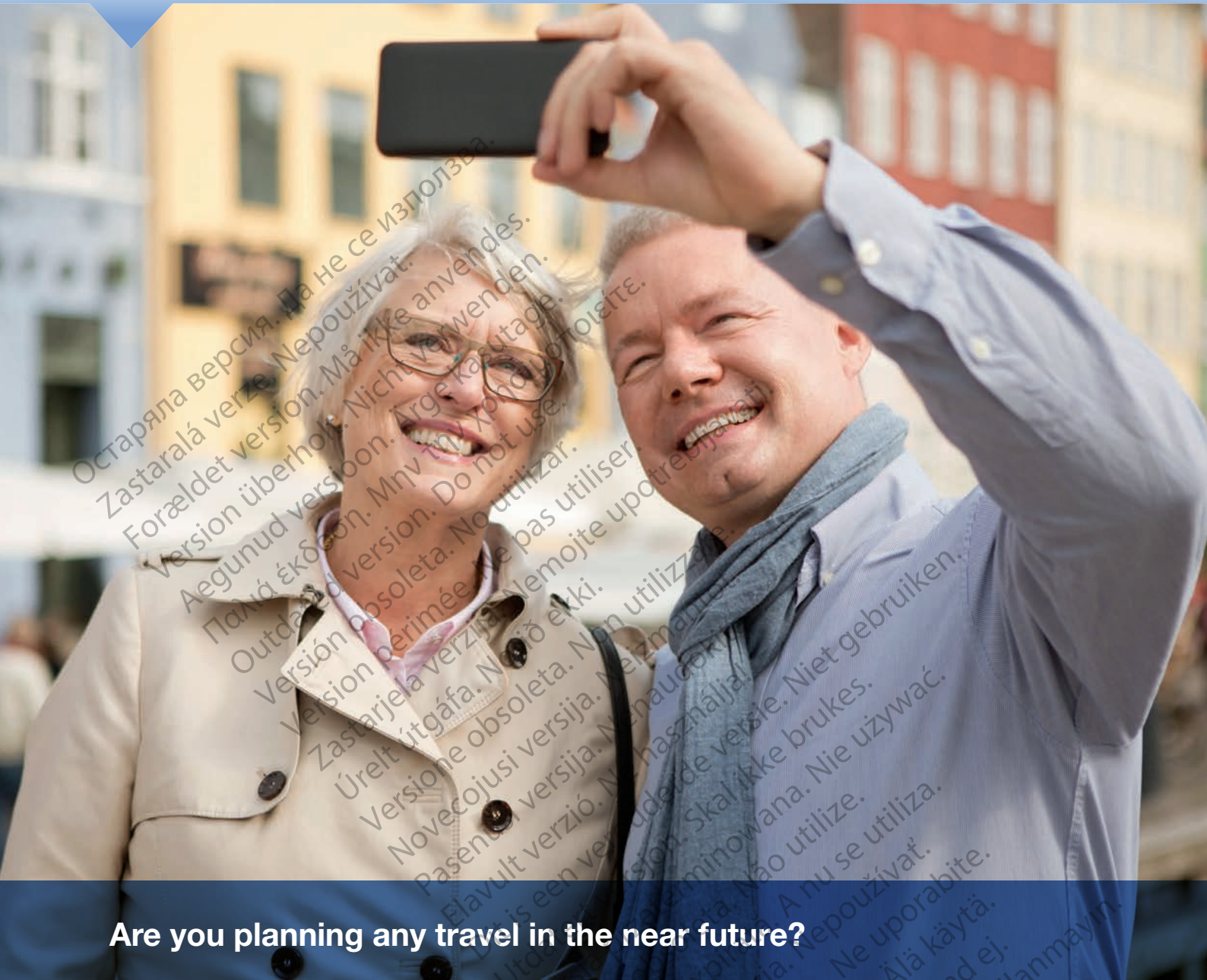




## Travel tips



**Are you planning any travel in the near future?**

**For many of us, taking a trip or a holiday can be a great way to relax — relaxation can be very helpful.**

Of course, you do need to take your condition into account when planning a trip, travel may have effects on your health. For example, we know that air travel can affect heart failure, and in some cases can cause problems with your breathing and the way your blood flows.<sup>7</sup>

Here are some tips to help you stay healthy when travelling for long periods of time:

- **Change your position, walk if you can or when it is safe to do so.**
- **Do some simple exercises in your seat, like stretching your legs and ankles.<sup>1</sup>**
- **Keep well hydrated.<sup>1</sup>**
- **Avoid drinking alcohol and caffeine during your journey.<sup>1</sup>**



When planning a journey, you may also want to consider the availability of medical care, and in particular specialist heart care, at your destination. In various places, not all of them remote, it may be difficult for you to get the help you would need in an emergency, and you need to take account of this.

Always check with your healthcare professional before travelling, in most cases, it will be possible for you to travel.<sup>1</sup> Read on to find tips on how to make travelling easier for you.

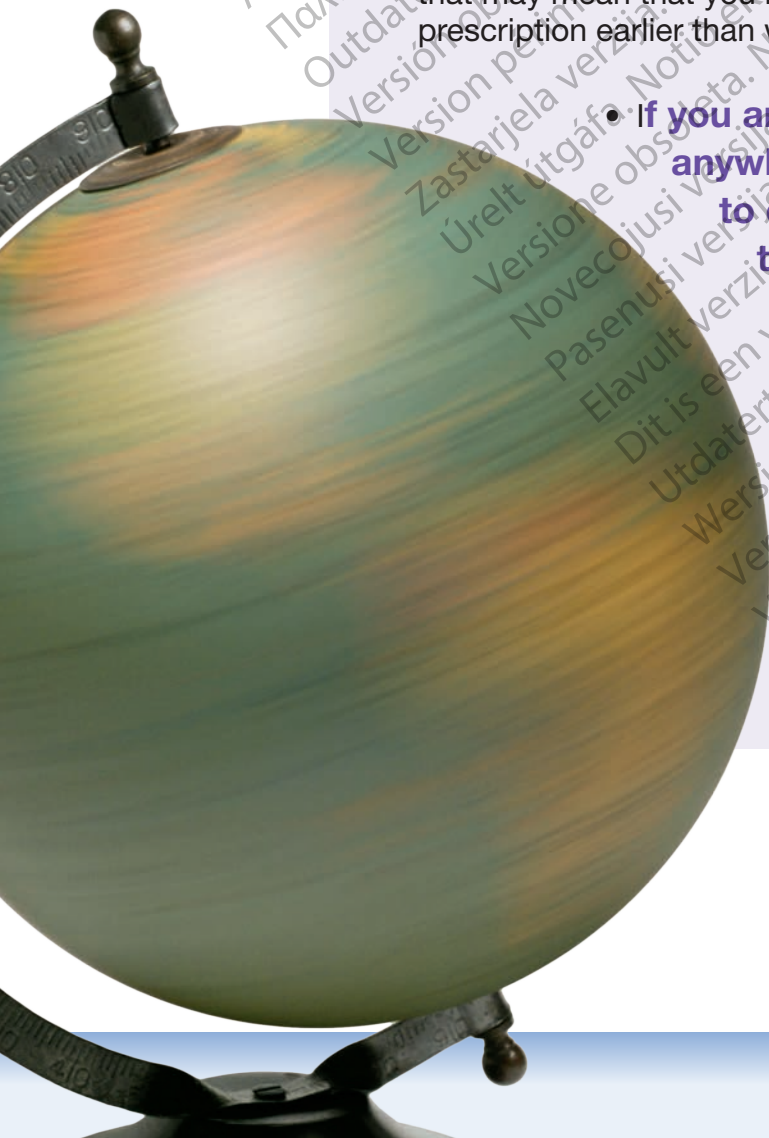




## Travel tips

Here are some tips to make traveling easier. If you find that your own questions are not covered here, please talk to your healthcare professional.

- **If you need vaccinations to travel, make sure you get these in good time.** Some must be given several weeks in advance. It is particularly important for vulnerable people, such as those with heart failure, to avoid further illness and infection.
- **Keep a list of your medicines, dosages and how you take your medications with you at all times.<sup>1</sup>**
- **Take enough medicines to last you the whole holiday** that may mean that you have to ask your doctor for a new prescription earlier than would usually be the case.
- **If you are going overseas, or flying anywhere, get a letter from your doctor to explain your condition(s) and treatment.<sup>1</sup> Keep this with you.**
- **If you are travelling abroad, make sure you have sufficient travel insurance.**





- **Crossing time zones can make it difficult to stick to your treatment regime, so speak to a member of your healthcare team about this before you go.** When you arrive at your destination, you should:
  - Establish a new routine and try to get used to it as soon as possible - eat and sleep at the correct times for your new time zone, not when you usually eat and sleep at home
  - Avoid napping as soon as you arrive at your destination, even if you're tired after a long flight, try to stay active until the correct time to sleep; this will help your body adjust more quickly
  - Try to stay active and spend time outdoors, natural light will help your body adjust to a new routine
- **If you have a pacemaker or implantable cardioverter defibrillator, make sure you notify airport staff.** These may be affected by airport security measures.
- **Make sure you are prepared for the temperatures at your destination, particularly if these are very cold or very hot.** If you are going anywhere very cold you must avoid hypothermia and stay warm. Wear layers of clothing, including a hat, gloves and thick socks, and make sure that the place you're staying in is sufficiently heated. If you are going somewhere very hot, stay in the shade and in particular avoid the sun between 11.00 and 15.00 each day. Don't do anything that is too physically demanding.
- **Sudden changes in temperature can make you feel unwell, so avoid saunas, steam baths, etc.**
- **If you are planning to partake in any sports or physical exertion, including walking, swimming or diving, speak to a healthcare professional about this before you leave.**





**Do bear in mind that you may need advice from your healthcare team about any form of travel. It is not just air travel that can affect people with heart failure; extended periods sitting in a car, bus or coach may also raise issues. So do have a chat with a healthcare professional, so that you can get the very best from your travels.**

If you happen to have an urgent medical concern, please call your doctor, go to your local emergency room, or call your local Emergency Contact number. Remember, your doctor is your primary source for information on your condition and treatment. Be sure to speak with them if you have any questions or concerns.

#### References

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2. Hoigné P, Gibbs JS. Can my patient with CVD travel to high altitude? *Practitioner* 2013 Apr; 257 (1760): 27-30.