

Overseas Travel Feedback and Information for Future Travellers on HPN

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Parenteral Nutrition - Down Under™

Although the planning of my recent trip to England and Paris was exhausting, the trip itself was an incredibly positive experience and I am very grateful to all who helped make it happen, including Baxter. Now that nearly all Australasian HPNers have use of the Bodyguard portable pump and, as a result of the instigation and efforts of PN-DU (as well as, in Australia, considerable work and expense by REM Systems), both Qantas and Air New Zealand have approved use of the pump in-flight (including during take-offs and landings), my hope is that many other HPNers will also soon be planning to experience ‘the trip of a lifetime’ or at least be able to consider it a possibility!

In providing this feedback and information from my travels to England and Paris in March/April 2012, my hope is that it will assist both Baxter and future travellers to have a smooth preparation time in the lead-up to any major overseas trip. My involvement with PN-DU and contact with the UK HPN support group, PINNT, as well as contact with another traveller (provided by Baxter) was extremely helpful, however there was still quite a lot of information that I found out in the last 10-14 days or so before I flew out. This caused untold added stress, knowing that either I had unnecessarily wasted time organising some things myself or quickly trying to make sure things were going to be manageable when I got there eg having to check whether relatives could accommodate an extra fridge!

My experience was obviously in England (and Paris, although still provided by England’s homecare company) and I understand there will be different set-ups in other countries. Considering the differences between countries and the impact on trip planning that every difference has, it would be extremely helpful for the HPNer to know what to expect as early as possible in the planning process.

It is also my strong hope that Baxter will recommend and provide any future travellers with PN-DU’s contact details so that we can help with further travel tips for HPNers not necessarily related to homecare provision eg the best option to try and get pre-existing health condition travel insurance, what prior permissions you need from airlines, etc.

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	Subject	Information for HPN traveller
1.	Homecare company information	The homecare company will provide a detailed booklet on arrival on what the HPNer can expect from them as well as their full contact details (contactable 24 hours/day) and details of the UK HPN support group, PINNT. .
2.	Consumables/dry products	All consumables/dry products can be provided by the homecare company in England. This is important to know well in advance as it obviously affects luggage weight etc.
3.	TPN production	I was advised early on in my planning that if there was a cost difference in the production of my TPN in England, I would be required to pay the difference. This is very understandable and acceptable, however as no amount possibly payable was ever advised (and I actually never heard anything more about this), it would certainly assist planning, not to say reduce stress levels, if any approximate cost difference could be advised well in advance and BEFORE tickets/accommodation are booked. A good number of people on HPN are either on disability incomes or part-time wages, therefore an overseas trip is a large amount of money. An added cost of say

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		<p>\$1,000 could be the difference between the trip proceeding or no longer being possible. So at least an approximate amount needs to be advised before air tickets are booked. Or again, if there is no cost difference, it would be good to be told as early on as possible, so planning can proceed without added stress.</p> <p>If an approximate cost difference was established and was quite significant, it would be good to be able to explore other possible options with the HPNer's medical team eg discussing whether standard off-the-shelf bags could be used for the period of the trip in order to reduce costs (or the non-refrigerated variety which would also avoid refrigeration challenges while travelling).</p>
4.	Documentation	Baxter UK (Willow) is able to provide the needed documentation for travelling with TPN and will even provide any needed translations of this documentation.
5.	Long-last Bodyguard battery	Because at the time of my travels, Baxter Australia only had one long-last Bodyguard battery, it is necessary to 'book' the use of this well in advance if the HPNer is going to be infusing on a long-haul flight. They will also need to know at the start, the value of the battery as well as any other Baxter equipment eg backpack, pump, normal battery, so as to be able to organise for adequate insurance cover.
6.	Doctor's signature	A UK doctor is required to sign off on the TPN prescription. It is the responsibility of the HPNer to find a UK doctor prepared to do this either through their own consultant or for example through the UK HPN support group. Either way, the HPNer's consultant will need to liaise with the UK doctor.
7.	TPN delivery schedule	The bags of TPN provided by homecare companies in the UK have a longer expiry (in my case 1 month expiry as opposed to 1 week here). This information is good to know early on to assist with organising the delivery schedule (ie a delivery every week may not be necessary).
8.	Storage of TPN	Government regulations in the UK require homecare companies to provide specialised fridges (with temperature alarms and a lock) for the storage of TPN in the home. TPN is not to be kept in an ordinary fridge. For travelling HPNers staying with relatives, this means that they will deliver a fridge to the relatives' home(s) if staying there for more than approximately 4 days and collect it on the HPNer's departure. The TPN courier is also required to unpack the boxes of TPN and wait until the fridge is back at the correct temperature before leaving. This is good for relatives to know as TPN will be delivered before the HPNer's arrival.
9.	Travelling with TPN	<p>These UK government regulations also mean they have specialised boxes for transporting TPN between travel destinations. These boxes are much larger than Australian Baxter boxes (approximately 2 feet square) and it is good for the traveller to know this beforehand as it could affect hire car size, how far they can travel, etc. Each box (lined with polystyrene) holds up to 4 bags of TPN and comes with different styles of icebricks depending on the homecare company. In any event, UK regulations prohibit icebricks from coming into direct contact with the TPN, so the bricks are either covered in cardboard or have a separate compartment within the box and are much larger than the icebricks we have here.</p> <p>When travelling, additional icebricks are provided and when frozen, are used to rotate with the icebricks in the box(es). The TPN is to be kept in the boxes.</p> <p>For any travel requiring secured luggage, the homecare company will provide securely strapped boxes verified to keep the TPN at the required temperature for 36 hours (the time and date of temperature expiry printed clearly on the box(es)). This can be provided at any time during the daytime on any day (including weekends and public holidays) before travel.</p>
10.	Other provisions	Baxter UK (Willow) will also provide a portable dripstand, a portable/foldable table, medical pliers for the removal of TPN bag caps and prefilled 10ml saline syringes for flushing lines. They are also able to collect and dispose of sharps containers.