

Planning to Go Out

Going for an outing after a spinal cord injury involves planning ahead. Always carry a cell phone with you when going out in case of emergency. Also, you may want to bring water to stay hydrated. Here are some other things to think about before going out.

Transportation: Accessible transit is available in many cities. When getting around, make sure you give yourself plenty of time to arrive. Services like Wheel-Trans or accessible taxis often need to be booked in advance. In Toronto, most buses and many subway stations have wheelchair access. Plan your route by checking which stations are accessible. Always check service outages on the day of travel to make sure elevators are functioning. If you can transfer to a car seat by yourself, you can use any regular taxis.

Bladder and bowel: Going out can require planning around your bowel and bladder routines. Consider emptying your bladder and/or bowel before going out. Bring bladder supplies with you. Consider bringing a change of clothing in case of an accident.

Medications: Check your medication schedule before going out. You might need to take your medication before going out or to bring them with you.

Endurance: When first going out, try shorter outings (e.g. 4hrs). You may not have the same energy for going out as you used to. Check your skin when you return. Outings can sometimes add extra pressure to your skin and put you at risk of pressure sores.

Wheelchair access: Make sure that your location is wheelchair accessible. Call ahead of time and ask the following questions:

- Is there a ramp to get to the front/rear doors? Are there accessible door buttons?
- Is there an elevator available for wheelchairs?
- Are there stairs to get to the washroom? Is it wheelchair accessible?
- Is there accessible parking close by?

Support person: Depending on what you are doing, your support person may be able to get free access. Easter Seal's 'Access 2 Card' gives your support person free access to some events. Read more about it at www.access2card.ca. When going out, always ask if discounts or free admission is provided to support persons.

Safety Note: When first going out, try shorter outings of less than four hours.

Contact your Recreation Therapist for more information.

COMMUNITY

Originally written by: Charlene Alton. ©2017 University Health Network - Toronto Rehab. All rights reserved. **Disclaimer:** Information is provided for educational purposes only. Consult a qualified health professional regarding specific medical concerns or treatment. University Health Network does not assume and disclaims any liability to any party for any loss or damage caused by errors or omissions in this publication.

www.SpinalCordEssentials.ca

SCE2-Sc1-2017-03-22