



# Helpful Tips when Travelling Long Distances to Cancer Care

Many people live far away from a cancer centre. You may be travelling in your own vehicle or in the vehicle of a friend or family member. You may be travelling in a medical transportation van or by bus. If you need to travel long distances for cancer care and appointments, these tips may be helpful.

## Getting ready to travel

### Get more information

Read about the cancer centre you are going to



[www.ahs.ca/cancerdiagnosed](http://www.ahs.ca/cancerdiagnosed)

pick 'Cancer Centre Information' and find the centre by choosing the town it is in.

Find out about the **Indigenous Cancer Patient Navigators** if you are not already connected to one. You or someone who is helping you can call them if you want extra support.

Ask about **home and community care** where you live. If you need help after your cancer appointments, they may be able to get ready for when you return home.

### Gather things to help you travel as comfortably as possible

- A heat pack or hot water bottle to help with aches and pains.
- A small pillow or two to help create comfort during the drive.
- Music that will help you pass the time in a good way and headphones to listen with; not everyone likes the same music.
- Comfy clothes to wear while you're travelling. It can help to dress in layers so you can take clothes off if you are hot, or add more clothing if you are cold.



Find this brochure about Indigenous Cancer Patient Navigation and other information online: [ahs.ca/cancerindigenous](http://ahs.ca/cancerindigenous)

## Pack food and drink to take with you

- Bring water or something else to drink.
- Bring foods you enjoy.

If you want to bring foods that need to be kept cool (you store in the fridge at home), pack them with an ice pack or bottle of frozen water. If you use a bottle of frozen water, you can drink the bottled water once it thaws.

You may feel sick after your treatment. Pack foods that don't have a strong smell as they may be easier to eat.

### Snack ideas:

- Fruit such as blackberries, apple slices, or grapes.
- Bannock or muffins.
- Sandwich with meat such as wild game, chicken, or beef.
- Jerky.
- Pemmican.
- Fruit and nut, or protein bars.
- Trail mix (nuts, seeds, dried fruit).
- Crackers and nut butter or cheese.

## On the day of travel

### Get settled in the vehicle

Wear your comfy cloths and keep your special comfort supplies close to you.

Sit in the most comfortable seat possible.

You might find it helpful to:

- Be near a door.
- Sit in the front passenger seat if it's available.
- Pick a spot with as much room as possible for your feet and legs.

Take keys and other items out of your pants pockets for the drive (specifically back pockets or bulky items in front pockets) and put them safely in your bag.

Get your feet and legs in a comfortable position. Place your pillow(s) around you to help make your body more comfortable in the seat. For example, if there is space between your lower back and the seat you can put a pillow there to help support your back.

You may wish to share this information before the day of travel with:

- The driver.
- The medical transportation coordinator.
- A nurse or family member who can discuss this with the driver.

### Care for your body as you travel

Move your feet and legs from time to time as you travel.

Change positions from time to time. Consider sitting so your weight is on one side for awhile and then shift to your other side. When you are changing positions, use your hands on the seat to help you.

Regular breaks are important. We suggest about a 15 minute break after every 2 hours of driving or so. During the break:

- Stand up outside the vehicle.
- Gently stretch parts of your body that feel tired or sore.
- Take a short walk around the vehicle, to the bathroom, or look in the store.

[www.cancercarealberta.ca](http://www.cancercarealberta.ca)

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