

NOTES FROM PATIENTS FOR PATIENTS FOR VISITING CYPRUS VERSION 05.02.2024, REVIEWED.

Assistance with travel planning and booking - Travel Support Cyprus

To get the final appointment confirmation at the clinic you will need to send in the travel/flight confirmation. Your own one or the one of the medical travel agency of the clinic - TravelSupportCyprus.

As the agency matches online prices and on top you get the free welcome package (personal pick-up at the airport by Thomas, transport to your accommodation together with the transport company (taxi or medical transport), luggage handling, filling of the fridge according to your shopping list, pick-up and transport to your first appointment at the clinic together with transport company), it is recommended to book via TravelSupportCyprus.

Travel Support Cyprus

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They are very knowledgeable about our special needs as a former Long Covid sufferers and are super understanding and professional. They also offer car hire, nanny services and personal care, and even dietitian services!

If you want to travel without the clinic's medical travel agency/local help, here is some more info we collected on flights and accommodation and we added some helpful 'travel hacks' in general after those two topics:

Flights

- Timing: Ideally arrive a few days before the first doctor's interview, **at least 2 days** and allow the same amount of time after your last treatment before you fly home. You need to be well rested and very hydrated before your treatments. For more than 10 flight hours and large time difference, **3 days** (works well over a weekend) is recommended.
- Wheelchair assistance (assisted flying) is an invaluable service that most airlines offer. So, make the request to your airline in advance (no explanation or proof of illness required). It means you won't have to stand up for long periods of time and help you navigate customs quickly. This assistance, while not easy emotionally, is helpful to reduce travel fatigue. You need to conserve your energy for when you hit the ground so save it in the areas you can. Larnaca International Airport (LCA) assistance can be requested with your airline at least 48 hours before departure. At Larnaca they will pick you up at the airplane with a wheelchair or you can use your own and will ride you through backdoors and elevators to baggage claim. Taxis are available and take 10-15 minutes to the city

centre, but there is a fixed airport charge of 20 Euros – so better use TravelSupportCyprus with free Airport service.

- If you suffer from POTS, wear compression wear and if you can afford it book business class or economy plus for reclining seats. Ask your family doctor to prescribe medication for ease of travel.
- Oxygen on the flight is available on all flight segments and is mostly useful for long haul flights. Most airlines have a simple form to complete requesting oxygen, as long as you need 2.8 litres or less. If you need more, then you will need to complete another form and you may need information from your doctor. Organise oxygen as soon as you have booked the flight. The airline only allows a certain number of passengers to use oxygen per flight. Oxygen concentrators with batteries are allowed on flights, but must be pre-registered too. <https://www.google.com/travel/flights> is usually giving you the cheapest options.

Accommodation

Airbnb.com and booking.com as well as other popular portals all work for Cyprus.

- Accommodation in Larnaca region is best near the beach, suitable for a pleasant walk, there are lots of shops to buy food and most restaurants offer delivery service.
- Avoid first beach line Finikoudes and Makenzie areas if you are noise sensitive – very busy and touristic from May to August!
- Avoid staying near the general hospital, because of the siren noise.
- Know the location of your accommodation – look on google maps and ask the clinic to make sure it will be quiet and accessible.

Transport

Taxis are the best way to get around. Taxis are very affordable (10-15 Euros within Larnaca). Elias Taxi is a great taxi firm that works with the clinic +357 99 823690 Whatsapp or phone and +357 24652465 phone

Best Taxi Apps: CabCY app and Bolt app.

Some prefer a rental car (from 30 Euros a day), especially if staying out of town in the villages nearby.

Medical

- It is wise to obtain travel insurance before you leave, but they won't cover existing conditions of course.
- The Apheresis Center is not a primary care service. The clinic is not open on evenings/night and Saturday or Sunday and therefore does not provide a primary care role. St. Raphael's Private Hospital is the first address in Larnaca to turn to outside the Apheresis Center opening hours: <https://www.st-raphaelhospital.com/> but we have found the Apollonion Private Hospital <https://www.apollonion.com/en/> to be the best (and they also place the apheresis catheters and are aware of the apheresis procedure), but they are a 30 min drive away, in Nicosia.

Medication

- Despite availability of most/all medications in Cyprus you should take with you any medications you will need or expect to need in Cyprus.
- Please always have with you the current prescription and medication schedule.

Pharmacy

- Most pharmacies do close at lunchtime, but they are open later at night normally till around 7pm.
- Be aware that they close for a half day on Wednesdays.
- There are also always 2 pharmacies open in the evening, keep a note of this link as they change daily: <https://www.cyta.com.cy/night-pharmacies/en>
- Pharmacies may not have all the supplements you need. iHerb.com delivers to the island and Amazon.de too. Holland & Barrett in Metropolis Mall for supplements that can't be found in small local pharmacies.

Covid Testing

- Leave room in your second bag to bring home the inexpensive rapid tests that you can purchase on the island.
- LFTs/Rapid Tests used in official places are obtainable in pharmacies that issue certificates.
- Currently no testing is required for day clinics and hospitals.

Masks

- Many (the staff is constantly tested) wear N95 / FFP2 masks in the clinic. Ideally also Covid self-test every time before going into the clinic.
- Masks are accessible for purchase all over the island.

Hydration & Food

- The apheresis treatment itself takes 2-3 hours but the whole process can easily take longer. For some it might be easier to take some incontinence pads (available at the clinic) to ensure you are comfortable during the treatment (the session **has to be aborted** for you to visit the bathroom, you don't want to waste a precious minute on the machine). If you have a catheter then this is no problem, treatment can be stopped/started as often as needed).
- Best way without catheter: Drink lots until bedtime the night before the treatment. But do not fast on the morning of the treatment! **A small breakfast with a small drink is a must.** Don't rely on not drinking beforehand and thinking you can hold on. You should be drinking 3-4 litres the day before and be well hydrated before the treatment. Use electrolyte supplement to make the liquid go as far as possible.
- Foody app (Cyprus specific app) <https://www.foody.com.cy/cava-delivery> does deliveries from local supermarkets, restaurants and flowers. Alpha Mega supermarket has their own webpage to order <https://www.alphamega.com.cy/en> Wolt App is for ordering from local restaurants, basic pharmacies and covid tests. More expensive than Foody. Bolt is also great.
- Keep an electrolyte powder at home and bring it with you.
- You might like to take a snack with you for immediately after the treatment. Don't be surprised if you feel very hungry afterwards – You lose 2,500 calories per treatment.
- Also drink well after the treatment. It appears to help those who develop headaches afterwards too (it did that for several of us).

- The IV multivitamin/supplement cocktail at the end of the treatment through the machine works miracles for most – avoids crashing and symptom flare-ups!
- It is also recommended to have a good meal before and after each treatment. Preferably with protein (some found additional protein helped during treatment). Meals help blood pressure stabilisation as well. But if you have booked Clinical Nutrition Supervision, then all of that is taken care of.

Health/ Wellness

- Post apheresis, some have found the need for anti-coagulants and anti-virals, ideally take a 3-months supply with you from Cyprus. Also take Early Treatment packages in case of reinfections with you. Take Early Treatment Packages (for getting safely through reinfections) with you!
- Massage: find a reputable (Thai) massage centre. There are several addresses in Larnaca. This is very helpful for your circulation and overall self-care in between treatments.
- Menstruation can be unexpectedly heavy during treatment.

Clothes

- Take a fraction of the clothes that you think you're going to use. For women think comfy leggings, soft shirts and sweaters. You're not going to spend much time outside except rests and relax sessions on the beach or sitting in the sun/moonlight/fresh air.
- Please wear comfortable clothes for the treatment. The sleeves should be easy to be rolled up. Preferably t-shirt and sweat jacket, as the arms are not covered during the treatment.

Shopping & Supermarkets

- Have euro coins available when you go to the grocery store. They are required as a deposit for the grocery cart and you will get it returned when you insert the cart back in after shopping.
- The shops are open on Sundays. Lidl, Metro, Alphamega, are the largest grocery stores with literally anything available to you, but also each of the many small shops around the corner have the most necessary items. There are several large supermarkets' here that have a wide range of gluten/dairy free/organic etc ranges.
- Online shopping: many shops are delivering through the app foody.
- Alpha Mega – 7am – 9pm Monday – Saturday & 8am – 9pm Sunday
- The Green shop – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 9am – 6pm, Wednesday & Saturday 9am – 3.30pm, closed on Sunday
- Metro – 7.30am – 8.30pm Monday – Saturday & 9.30am – 7.30pm Sunday
- Sklavenides (formally carrefour) – 8am – 9pm Monday – Saturday & 9am – 9pm Sunday

Banks

- Most banks in Larnaca work up till lunchtime; they open around 8am and close at around 1pm Monday to Friday.

Extras

- Energy levels: in-between treatments, if you feel energetic, please do not be too active - your body needs energy to repair and to heal.
- Stock up with the drinks you might like in advance of your treatments – water, natural apple juice, coconut water. Take something to drink with you at the clinic but not citrusy. Snacks could be crackers or nuts if you feel your blood sugar is low.
- A lot of people get very hungry and tired after treatments so worth having snacks on standby for the following days.
- Chromecast 3 and Fire TV is useful to access TV from home. Chromecast 4 seems not to work in Cyprus.

Google/Maps/Translation

- Translate: download google translate or Deepl.com for your phone and tablet. Go ahead and download the English and Greek language off-line dictionary. If you're online, you can use the camera feature to translate something on a box or a menu. You can also have saved phrases and if you're online it can "speak" it for you. However – rarely needed, everyone speaks English.
- Signs etc. are in English and Greek.
- Maps: you can download the offline area map while on Wi-Fi for use while driving. The pedestrian option is not offline friendly but good in a pinch.
- The clinic is English, German, Russian and Greek speaking.

International Travel

- For some, this could be your first venture abroad or at least the first one alone. Here are some general tips for traveling internationally.
 - Securely keep pictures of the credit cards you take just in case (protected on your phone or in the cloud).
 - Have copies of your passport saved on your phone and in the cloud just in case.
 - Check your credit card company to see which cards do not impose a foreign service fee. American Express is sometimes not accepted except for car rentals, Airbnb and hotels. Some credit card companies still accept travel notifications, but most use a sophisticated fraud detection & customer notification process.
 - Be sure to put emergency information in your phone. It would not hurt to have a small area in your wallet for your insurance card, med list, emergency contact and allergies that is visible.
 - Download the airline app.
 - Figure out your mobile roaming calling and data options. Use Wi-Fi to avoid accidental roaming costs. Cheap prepaid cards are available (So Easy, Epic, Vodafone).