

UOAA communicates directly with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in the interest of making travel easier for all those traveling with an ostomy. No person living with an ostomy should ever be discouraged from traveling, whether for work, to see family and friends, take a vacation, or on a journey around the world. With our tips and [latest guidance from the TSA](#), you'll be empowered with the knowledge to help make your next travel experience a positive one.

1. Be Prepared: Pack ostomy supplies in at least two places – carry-on and checked luggage. Take extra supplies in case you are stranded where supplies may not be available. For domestic flights, scissors are allowed in your carry-on luggage as long as the cutting edge is no longer than 4 inches (2.4 inches within Canada, check other foreign nation rules). Consider having pre-cut pouches for convenience and international travel. And of course empty your pouch before arriving for a trip. Be aware that the [3-1-1 Liquids Rule](#) (also see [TSA Video](#)) requires that items classified as liquid, gel, aerosol, cream or paste must be carried in containers no larger than 100 mL (3.4 ounces). If your medical condition requires larger quantities and must be carried on board the plane they are [allowable](#), but must be declared at the security checkpoint and require additional screening.

2. Request Passenger Support: Travelers with disabilities and those with medical conditions such as an ostomy who have concerns about airport screening should contact TSA Cares at least 72 hours before travel: toll-free at (855) 787-2227 (Federal Relay 711) or email TSA-ContactCenter@tsa.dhs.gov. TSA Cares agents provide callers with information about what to expect during screening so that travelers may better prepare. They can also provide a flight itinerary and will coordinate assistance available from a Passenger Support Specialist (PSS) and/or customer service manager at the airport. Airports differ on the level of assistance offered.

3. Get a Notification Card: Download our printable travel communication card. This is NOT a special security pass but it is a way to communicate discreetly to agents that you have an ostomy. You can also show a note from your physician explaining any of your medical conditions.

4. Consider TSA Pre-Check: You may find shorter lines and wait times by enrolling (for a fee) in TSA Pre✓®. Passengers still undergo screening at the checkpoint, but they do not need to remove shoes, laptops, 3-1-1 liquids, belts, or light jackets during the screening process at participating airports. TSA Officers may still swab your hands for explosives or do a pat-down.

5. Arrive Early: All travelers should arrive at least two hours early for domestic and three hours early for international flights. Allow plenty of time to empty your pouch if needed to help ease the security screening process.

6. Communicate at the Start: At the beginning of the screening process inform the TSA officer that you have an ostomy pouch attached to your body and where it is located. You may provide the officer with the TSA notification card or other medical documentation to describe your condition.

7. Understand Protocol: TSA agents are professionals tasked with keeping you and fellow passengers safe. Be cooperative and respectful and know that their requests and actions are usually standard procedures. You should expect to be screened without having to empty or expose the ostomy through the advanced imaging technology, metal detector, or a pat-down. If your ostomy pouch is subject to additional screening may be required to conduct a self pat-down of the ostomy pouch outside of your clothing, followed by a test of your hands for any trace of explosives.

8. Expect a Pat-Down: Additional screenings are not uncommon as the TSA heightens security. TSA has recently consolidated pat-down procedures into one standardized procedure. You may also undergo a standard pat-down of areas that will not include the ostomy pouch.

9. Know Your Rights: Remember that you can request a private screening (along with a travel companion) and a chair, at any point in the process. You can also always request to speak with a Supervisory TSA Officer about any concerns. You should not be asked to expose your ostomy or remove clothing in sensitive areas—this is not allowed. If an incident occurs, report it to the TSA and follow up with UOAA to ensure proper action is taken to resolve the issue after TSA reviews the security footage.

10. Spread the Word/Foreign Travel: Encourage other people you know with an ostomy to follow these guidelines and not let fear of the unknown or a prior negative experience discourage them from enjoying travel. People with an ostomy frequently fly all over the world without incident. **If traveling to a foreign country** it is a good idea to have critical ostomy information written in their language. One of the 70 member associations of the [International Ostomy Association \(IOA\)](#) may be of help with this translation, local security procedures, as well as with locating supplies while visiting their country.