INFORMATION SHEET
NARCOTICS WHILE TRAVELLING

Expertenkomitee für Reisemedizin
Comité d'experts pour la médecine des voyages
Comitato di esperti per la medicina di viaggio
Expert committee for travel medicine

Many patients rely on medication (e.g. methadone, morphine-based preparations, Ritalin, Valium, etc.) as part of their treatment, which is subject to narcotics legislation (see the Swissmedic list).

Travelling within the Schengen Area

The Schengen Agreement between Switzerland and the EU has been in force since 12 December 2008. Anyone travelling with medicines containing controlled substances must carry an official certificate. This is completed by the prescribing doctor and certified by the dispensing pharmacist. A copy is sent to the cantonal pharmacy.

- Schengen Certificate Form
- List of countries belonging to the Schengen Area

Travelling to other countries (including in transit)

For travel to countries outside the Schengen Area, it is recommended that you contact the relevant consular representation of your destination country directly to enquire about the applicable entry requirements and any transit arrangements. Allow plenty of time, as it may take several weeks to receive the necessary information and organise the required medical certificates. The contact details for foreign missions in Switzerland can be found on the FDFA website (LINK).

Certain countries require travellers carrying medicines containing narcotics or other prescription-only medicines to present a medical certificate. The relevant templates for the certificate can be found on the Swissmedic website in four languages (DE | EN | FR | IT) (LINK).

The template provided by Swissmedic has been published, with minor adjustments, by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (LINK). This is not an officially recognised international form; therefore, the national regulations of the destination or transit countries must be taken into account.

Certain countries require **authorisation** to carry medicinal products containing controlled substances. Before travelling, you must check in good time with the consular representation or the competent authority of the country you are visiting to ascertain whether authorisation is required. If such authorisation is required, it must be requested from the competent national authority of the country you are visiting.

Permitted quantity

Where the carriage of medicines containing controlled substances is permitted, this generally applies in many countries to a quantity corresponding to the amount required for a **30-day** course of treatment (in line with UN recommendations). This also applies to travel within the Schengen Area. When travelling to other countries, the destination country determines the exact quantity, and this must be clarified in advance in each case. For longer stays, the patient must obtain a prescription for the medicines containing controlled substances required for their treatment from a doctor in the destination country and purchase them locally.

Information on travelling with medicines containing controlled substances

- For Schengen countries: Certificate issued by the prescribing authority – see the 'Schengen Certificate' template.
- For other countries (including transit countries): Obtain information on the regulations in force in your destination country from the relevant consular representation – template for a medical certificate.

Further information / References

- Swiss legislation: Swiss Federal Administration. 812.121.1 – Ordinance on the Control of Narcotic Drugs: http://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/20101221/index.html#a40 Travellers who are ill: SR 812.121.1 Art. 41 (import) and 42 (export)
- International Narcotics Control Board: Country Regulations for Travellers Carrying Medicines Containing Controlled Substances
- Schengen Agreement (Notice of 11 December 2008: Travelling with medicines containing narcotic substances)
- Swissmedic: Travelling abroad with medicines – what you need to know. https://www.swissmedic.ch/swissmedic/en/home/news/mitteilungen/auslandreisen-mit-medikamenten.html

Swissmedic	
Hallerstrasse 7, 3012 Bern	Contact: Narcotics Division:
Tel. +41 58 462 02 11	Tel. +41 58 414 04 20
http://www.swissmedic.ch	narcotics@swissmedic.ch

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