Mobility is one of the best features of today’s homecare ventilators. Most of these ventilators are small, lightweight and include internal and external batteries, and they can attach easily to a wheelchair or be carried in a backpack. And because of their portability, the ventilators can also accompany the patient during travel by car, train, boat or plane.

To ensure the trip proceeds smoothly, talk with others who have traveled with a ventilator, and gather all necessary documents and supplies. It’s also advisable to determine the requirements and restrictions of the mode of transportation—particularly air travel—and the resources at the final destination in the event that the ventilator needs servicing.
THE PLANNING STAGE

Talk with other ventilator users
Experienced travelers can provide insight and tips for how to handle luggage and face unexpected situations. Some travel agents specialize in organizing group trips for people traveling with special medical equipment.

Determine power availability at the destination
Check voltage, amps, watts, cycles and wall outlets availability. Pack extension cords, a surge-protected power bar and adapters. Consult an electrical expert and the equipment supplier to determine the appropriate conversion equipment.

Gather needed supplies
Bring a personalized travel kit with extra supplies in case something gets damaged or lost.

For example, consider packing:
- Blunt-nose scissors
- Masking tape
- String
- Safety pins
- Breathing medications, if needed
- Portable suctioning device
- Spare tracheostomy tubes with obturator and ties (one the same size and one smaller)
- Replacement inner cannula (for products using disposable inner cannula) or temporary inner cannula for use with reusable inner cannula tubes
- Suction catheter
- Facial tissues

Learn ventilator settings
Learn how to do basic ventilator setup and problem-solving. Ventilator connections can become loose, circuit breakers can pop out and knobs can get changed with equipment handling. Be able to explain how the ventilator works in case assistance is needed.

PREPARING FOR AIR TRAVEL

Determine airline policies
Plan a trip well in advance so there is ample time to collect needed supplies and documents.

Prior to making reservations, make sure the airline allows mechanical ventilation onboard, and if so, what are its procedures and policies.

When booking a flight, speak to a representative who specializes in helping travelers with special medical issues. Discuss any requirements the patient may have to ensure they can accommodate those needs.

If the patient is traveling alone, ask for additional airline personnel support to help with transport to the gate at departure and arrival.

Request a seat, preferably toward the front of the cabin, which has space to accommodate the ventilator and other carry-on medical equipment. Determine if there is an under-seat area where the ventilator can be stowed during takeoff and landing, and during turbulence, as required by the airlines and agencies regulating air travel.

Medical information sheet
Airlines may require a completed medical information sheet for patients traveling with a ventilator. Ask the patient’s physician to write a letter documenting his or her medical condition, clearance for travel, need for in-flight ventilation and that lists the equipment that must accompany the patient. Make sure that the letter is attached to the patient’s electronic travel itinerary, and that the patient also carries a copy of the letter.
**Obtain approval for in-flight ventilation**

Obtain airline approval that the patient can bring a ventilator on board the specific flight, and determine what information about the device is required.

The airline may require that its medical and engineering departments approve the ventilator to be used in-flight. If needed, provide them with the ventilator name, model number and specifications, as well as the manufacturer’s name, address, phone number and website address.

**Batteries and onboard electrical power**

It is advisable to bring batteries with sufficient power for ventilation throughout the duration of the flight, but be aware of potential restrictions on the use of Lithium ion batteries (see following section). Ask airline personnel if the aircraft has electrical outlets for medical use, if needed. Some airlines allow the use of onboard electricity (possibly for a fee) through a medical electrical outlet, though this is not a universal practice. Ensure that the aircraft’s power supply is compatible with the patient’s ventilator.

**Check availability of oxygen on the aircraft**

If oxygen is needed, check the airline’s policy for using onboard oxygen. Some airlines allow the use of the aircraft’s oxygen; some allow specific portable oxygen concentrator (POC) devices.

If a patient does not have a portable oxygen concentrator that complies with the regulations, contact the airline to discuss the patient’s needs, and determine the airline’s policy and fee, if any, for using oxygen.

**Prepare for possible technical problems with the ventilator**

Prior to traveling, ask a respiratory specialist or pulmonologist what to do in case the ventilator fails. Check with the ventilator supplier to determine if there is a place to repair the device at the destination. Ask for an estimated time for a typical repair and if loaner ventilators are available.

**THE DAY OF TRAVEL**

Get to the airport several hours before departure to allow for check in, getting through security and arriving at the gate with time to spare.

If the patient has requested the use of onboard oxygen, confirm with the check-in and gate agent that the necessary preparations have been made on the aircraft.

Allow extra time to pass through security checkpoints. Airport security personnel may not have experience with ventilators and accessories. Be prepared to explain that the equipment is a critical life-support system, and carry the letter from the physician as support. Allow enough time for officials to check the equipment.

Most ventilators, suction machines and dry or gel cell batteries pass through an airport X-ray scanner without damage. On the day of travel, test the ventilator’s internal and/or external battery life before boarding.

When bringing a ventilator onboard a plane, avoid checking the ventilator for storage in the baggage hold space. The climate control and air pressure in this compartment can be dangerous for the ventilator. In addition, the ventilator could be mishandled and damaged during loading and unloading.
TRAVELING WITH A LITHIUM-ION BATTERY

Lithium-ion batteries, used to power the Puritan Bennett™ 560 Ventilator, as well as laptops, digital cameras and cell phones, are considered “Dangerous Goods.” For that reason the International Air Transport Association (IATA),¹ which represents approximately 230 airlines that handle 93 percent of international flights, as well as the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)² regulate the transport of Li-ion batteries passengers on air travel.

Li-ion batteries between 100 watt hour and 160 watt hour, as contained in the Puritan Bennett™ 560 Ventilator, are allowed only if travelers first request permission from the airline, according to the IATA.

Spare batteries must be individually protected to prevent short circuits by placement in the original retail packaging or by otherwise insulating terminals, e.g. by taping over exposed terminals or placing each battery in a separate plastic bag or protective pouch, and carried in carry-on baggage only.³

INDEPENDENCE FOR PATIENTS. PEACE OF MIND FOR CAREGIVERS.

Lightweight and compact, the Puritan Bennett™ 560 portable ventilator helps enable patients to live with greater independence while providing caregivers with the peace of mind that comes with a reliable and trusted ventilation system with a long battery life.

- The internal lithium ion battery provides up to 11 hours of ventilator operation (depending on settings and other factors).*
- A real-time battery life indicator shows how much battery time is left, in hours and minutes, based on settings.
- The Puritan Bennett™ 560 ventilator is compact, lightweight (4.5 kg) and quiet (<30 dBA at 1 m). It transitions easily from hospital to home use.

The Puritan Bennett™ 560 Ventilator is suitable for use on commercial aircraft, per FAA requirements.

Patients traveling with the Puritan Bennett™ 560 Ventilator may be required by their airline to demonstrate evidence of compliance with the RTCA/DO-160F standard, as well as other requirements. For an airline travel letter and test report, visit www.covidien.com/PB560. Contact your airline prior to travel to determine airline specific requirements and documentation.

* On a fully charged battery at a setting of PIP = 10 cm H₂O, V₂ = 200 ml and rate = 20 bpm. Level adjustments, environmental conditions and physiological characteristics of the patient affect battery operating time.


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