



Summer is here: AIFA's suggestions for storing and using medicines correctly

Medicines also fear the heat, which is why, in summer, some extra care is needed to store them correctly. Wherever we go, we must not lack what is necessary to continue our therapies safely. However, in hot weather, before leaving for holiday, it is a good idea to observe a few simple precautions. First of all by reading the Information Leaflet, which contains the exact storage methods and temperatures. It is important to respect them because safety does not go on holiday.

Here are some tips:

Temperature is important, respect it

First of all, the correct storage temperature must be carefully checked on the Information Leaflet. Unless special conditions are specified, medicines should be stored in a cool, dry place at a temperature below 25 °C. When travelling, it is a good idea to have refrigerated bags that can maintain an adequate temperature for the duration of the journey.

In the car, remember that the passenger compartment is cooler than the boot.

On the plane, it is better to carry life-saving medicines in hand luggage along with prescriptions. Remember that liquids with a volume of no more than 100 ml can be carried in hand luggage and must be placed in transparent bags, while there are no restrictions for tablets and capsules.

Some medicines require special storage conditions. Insulin, for example, must be stored in the refrigerator at a controlled temperature between 2 and 8 °C. Thyroid drugs, contraceptives and other hormone-based medicines are also particularly sensitive to temperature variations.

In any case, avoid exposing them to heat sources and direct sunlight.

Pay attention to the appearance

If the appearance of the medicine you usually take looks different or has defects such as an abnormal colour or smell or a different consistency, consult your doctor or pharmacist before taking it, as these changes are not always an indication that the medicine has deteriorated.

Always check compatibility with sun exposure

Some medicines can cause photosensitivity reactions such as dermatitis or eczema. This phenomenon can occur in particular with antibiotics (tetracyclines, quinolones), sulphonamides, oral contraceptives (pill), non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), promethazine (antihistamine), medicines used in some inflammatory bowel diseases (mesalazine). In these cases, it is necessary to follow the recommendations given in the information leaflets regarding sun exposure, and to use adequate protection. In specific cases, for example after the use of ketoprofen-based patches or gels, it is necessary to avoid exposure to the sun for up to two weeks after treatment.

Prefer solid formulations

Remember that, whenever possible, the use of solid formulations such as tablets is preferable to liquid formulations in summer as they are less sensitive to high temperatures.

Bring the original packaging with you

A common mistake when packing luggage is to put different medicines in the same container to save space. This can make it difficult to recognise medicines, and there is a risk of confusing expiry dates, warnings or dosages. Furthermore, blister packs and boxes protect medicines from light and moisture, unlike pill boxes or containers not explicitly intended for transporting medicines. These could easily overheat and alter them. Only the dose to be taken should be taken out of the original container.

Should it be necessary to purchase a medicine, the original container with the composition can help in communicating with local doctors and pharmacists.

To ensure you don't forget to take your medicines at the right times, it is useful to download the "AIFAmedicinali" App (available for Android and iOS mobile phones), which allows you to create your own medicine cabinet with alerts to remind you when to take them or to signal if there are any shortages in the pharmacy.

With these simple but essential precautions that make up a small handbook to carry in your suitcase for safe travels, your holidays will be more peaceful.

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