## LowVision A LERT

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## Low Vision Travel Resources

**Visionconnection.org**—click on Tips for Confident Living. The Travel section lists agencies and more

**Lighthouse International**—call 800-829-0500 and request the "Tour & Travel" fact sheet

**Access-able.com** for comprehensive travel resources

For travel gadgets and devices:

Independentliving.com
Abledata.com
Enablemart.com/LowVision

## Sightseeing on the Oregon coast

Imagine dynamic waves breaking onto a rugged coastline. Huge haystack-shaped black rocks jut out of the water. On the other side of the road, lush, green trees tower above.

We were winding our way along U.S. Highway 101 in Oregon. The smells and sounds helped me to experience these wonderful sights. We stayed in a charming, beachfront inn with an ocean view and bracing ocean breezes.

Vision loss hasn't kept me from enjoying new places and people and it shouldn't stop you. The key is planning! Research destinations, get organized, and enlist experts.

Here's how to make the most of traveling with limited sight:

- Consult a travel agent with experience planning for people with vision loss. (See "Resources," left.)
- Check out the places you want to visit online or through your library. The more you know about the sights, the more you can enjoy them even if you can't see them clearly.
- Be specific about your visual and physical limitations when making reservations. Ask about procedures in case of fire.
- Take advantage of any audio-guided or docent-led tours offered by parks, monuments, and museums. Call in advance to make reservations—discounts for people with low vision may be available.
- Pack a low-vision travel kit. Take a flashlight, magnifier, high-wattage light bulb, and nightlight. I also take bright blue painter's masking tape, marked "delicate," so it doesn't leave adhesive behind when removed—available in hardware or home supply stores. I use it to define light switches, door locks, and



appliance controls. Also in the kit—a travel alarm, portable tape or CD player, bold line pen and signature guide, medication list, and itinerary in large letters, with all the destinations, flight

numbers, and airline and ground transportation phone numbers.

- It's okay to ask for courtesy vehicles or wheelchairs to get to the gate safely, even if you usually walk. Ask to be pre-boarded and oriented to exit locations and restrooms.
- Tell flight attendants, drivers, or conductors what kind of help you would need in an emergency.
- Get the latest on airport security regulations and pack accordingly. Those plastic baggies are great organizers.
- Keep money, tickets, and important documents accessible and safe. A travel wallet, fanny pack, or money belt will keep photo ID, currency, and documents handy. Put your meds in a small carry-on. (Never pack them in checked luggage.)
- Mark your luggage with bright ribbon, tape, or tags.
- At your destination, take time to organize the space to make it functional and safe. That charming inn we stayed in was very cluttered. I needed to ask employees to move extra chairs and lovely obstacles out of my path.

Travel is always more for me than seeing sights. It's the new friends we make and the memories we bring home. Pick a destination and start packing!

## **FOR EASIER READING:**

- **Task lamps.** Use high-wattage bulbs and aim light on what you want to see.
- Magnifying devices. There are many kinds for many purposes. An occupational therapist can help you choose wisely. (Call your chapter for referrals.)
- Make the print on your computer really big. Increase letter size. Look for a set of small, medium, and larger boxes or a plus and minus sign on the page. Or try "Page" in the tool bar, or "Zoom" under View. Both offer text size adjustments.
- Select PDF documents whenever possible. Click the magnifying glass icon to make everything, including pictures, as large as you want. (You will need Adobe Reader, which can be downloaded free. Visit adobe.com.)

To read **Momentum** go to **nationalms society.org/Magazine** and select **PDF**.

To listen to **Momentum**, select **AUDIO**, and follow instructions on the screen. **Momentum Audio** can be heard on your computer, downloaded to your MP3 player, or converted into a CD.

If you have impaired vision and no access to a computer with Internet, call your chapter at 1-800-344-4867. Give your name and mailing address. Your information is confidential, but we need it to address this issue. Thank you.

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