



# AviationHealth ASSOCIATION

# AVIATION MEDICAL

## BULLETIN

Published by aviation health association because  
health and fitness matter to aviators

## SPECIAL EDITION: DOS AND DON'TS OF GETTING YOUR FAA MEDICAL EXAM

***We suggest you print and file this with your medical file to review before every physical.***


We frequently get questions regarding how to prepare for the FAA Flight Physical. These questions typically address common concerns that we would like to address in a DO and DON'T format to assist in your next visit your Aviation Medical Examiner (AME).

DO go for your Flight Physical when you are in good health. This seems obvious, but usually because of scheduling factors, many a Pilot have reported for their medical exam in the midst of suffering a cold, or worse (with a cast on their arm, walking with a cane following back or leg surgery, etc.). Such issues can compromise the Pilot's ability to meet medical standards. Further the AME is completely within their right to deny or defer your exam to the FAA Office of Aerospace medicine. Go for you exam when you are at your best.

DO bring medical records. If, since your last exam, you've been treated for a medical or dental condition, bring records to verify it. For a majority of medical conditions ask your treating healthcare provider to compose a concise summary letter (signed, dated, and on letterhead – not prescription pad notes) that addresses the following:

- Diagnosis (diagnoses), (Example: Left Rotator cuff tear; GI reflux disease),
- Treatment with any ongoing therapy, (Ex. Surgical repair on 2/1/2011, followed with 14 weeks Physical therapy; dietary modifications and Prilosec 20mg a day),
- Response to treatment and full release statement ("Fully recovered and released without restrictions on 6/15/2011).

For conditions that are more complicated and/or may require a Special Issuance Authorization (SIA or "waiver") from the FAA, contact your AME or other aeromedical consultants ahead of your flight physical.



DO bring the “Applicant Copy” of your previous FAA flight physical exam as well as any correspondences from the FAA (ex. SIA). Never assume that your AME will readily provide a copy of this for you. You should always ask for a copy of the “Applicant Copy”, along with your new medical certificate from your AME, at the conclusion of your exam. This is your copy of this regulated exam and can be helpful in completing future exams or responding to inquiries from the FAA about past medical exams. Keep them in a file with other important records.

DO *carefully* read your new medical certificate before you sign it. Even minor typos can cause problems for you down line, and the use of white-out on medical certificates is not appreciated by the FAA. If there is an error problem on the certificate, ask the AME to correct it. It is a legal document and needs to be treated as such.

DON'T write on the front of the certificate. Along the lines of reading before signing for your certificate, never write on the front of the medical certificate, other than your signature. You would be surprised how many Pilots use this index card piece of paper as a note pad and have been significantly inconvenienced by it.

DON'T get a physical exam when you will not pass. While this should be a “no brainer”, many Pilots are concerned that if they do not renew their medical in the month that it's due, horrible things will befall them. This is not the case. However, they will have problems if they fly knowing they have a medical condition or taking a medication that is prohibited by the FAA.

DON'T knowingly or willingly falsify, conceal or cover-up by any trick scheme or device a material fact, or make any false fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations or entries on your FAA Medical Exam Form (8500-8, bottom left corner). In our experience, those who have not appreciated this advice will regret it: maybe not today; maybe not tomorrow, but someday.

These are just some of the basic hints for preparing for and taking the FAA medical exam. We will present more in the future, and encourage you to let us know if you have questions regarding this process.

In closing, remember, you have aeromedical resources at your disposal that can advise you on the FAA position on medical conditions and medications, and help you keep or regain your medical certification. Let us know how we can be of service to you as the FAA medical exam is not something where you should “wing it”.

-Thomas B. Faulkner, MD, MHA