

CAPITOL CITY MEDICAL TEAMS
GENERAL TRIP NOTES
(revised 4-26-10)

Below you will hopefully find some useful information about your upcoming medical trip.

PURPOSE

You should be going on this trip not merely to fix medical problems, but to make friends and build relationships. Establishing relationships with the people you are serving is just as important as the medical services you are providing. Remember to treat all people with dignity and respect.

TO DO RIGHT NOW!

Get your immunizations!
Get your passport!

PASSPORT

Check your passport for the expiration date. Make sure it's valid for 6 months AFTER you return from the trip. Get or renew your passport as soon as possible! See the useful links section on our website.

Make at least two copies of your passport - one to take along on the trip and one to stay at home. **Keep the extra trip passport copy in a separate place from your official passport.**

MONEY

Ecuador's currency is the US dollar. Even if the bills are accepted in the States, Ecuadorians will NOT accept torn or worn bills. Your money doesn't have to be new, but make sure it's "fresh."

In **Peru** do **NOT** bring \$100.00 bills that begin with the serial number letters CB due to counterfeit concerns. **DO NOT BRING BROKEN, TORN, OR EXTREMELY OLD BILLS OF ANY DENOMINATION.** They will not be accepted.

ATMs usually offer the best exchange rates, however they usually charge a transaction fee. It's not recommended to make several small withdraws at ATMs unless you're worried about holding cash. There are no ATMs in Coya, Peru. They are available in Pisac and Urubamba.

Airport moneychangers charge more in exchanging money than non-airport moneychangers.

You could go to a bank in the states before your trip and exchange money, but it could take weeks and it will cost you more.

Call your credit card company to let them know when you'll be out of the country so they won't think your card is stolen and deny your purchases. Have the expiration date and 3 digit number on the back of the card available when you make the call.

Do not bother with Travelers checks. Many places will not take them.

CLOTHING

Bring at least three pairs of scrubs and pack them in your carry-on bag.

Bring one reasonably nice set of clothes for a celebratory event, often dinner, at the end of the trip, if desired.

Check the climate and weather of your campaign site and pack accordingly. Remember cotton doesn't dry quickly in humid climates.

AIRLINES, LUGGAGE, AND AIRPORT TAXES

Check with your specific airline carrier for their regulations and policies because they may have different policies from what is written here.

For international flights, each person is usually limited to two check-in bags of 50 pounds. (If you're flying on a South American airline, it may be less due to the limited size of the plane.) Your 50 pound bags are reserved mostly for medical supplies and will be packed on packing day. You will probably need to pack your toiletries in your check-in bags.

Be sure to check your luggage all the way to your final destination. If you don't, the airlines may charge you additional fees or claim that your luggage is too big and charge you an additional fee.

Each person is also limited to one carry-on bag, and a "purse" or personal item. These must fit in the overhead bins and/or under the seats.

Pack your personal clothing and items in your carry-on bag.

Check the most current United States transportation rules. Google the Transportation Security Administration for the restricted materials.

Before you leave the country, be sure to save at least \$35 to pay the country's exit taxes. You will need to pay this tax at a separate location from the counter where you checked your luggage. You will receive a receipt indicating that you paid your tax. Save the receipt to turn in as an expense.

CUSTOMS

When going through customs in a foreign country, you will need to pick up your checked luggage at the first stop in that country and go through customs. You will need to pick up your luggage even if you checked it through to another destination.

When going through customs, you may be asked to push a button to cause either a red or green light to shine. If the green button shines, you may pass through. If you get the red button, you will need to have your bags inspected by a customs agent. If you are going to Coya, Peru, it is at this point that you will need to produce your letter of invitation and Kausay Wasi Customs documents (provided by the Clinic). If the customs agent takes anything, you need to make sure you get a receipt for the taken item(s).

HOTELS

If you stay in a hotel which caters to westerners, you should have few problems.

At other hotels there will probably not be heat in your rooms. If you're in the mountains, it'll likely get very cold, even in summer (our winter). Several blankets are usually provided, but some people need to bring long underwear, sleeping bags, hats, gloves, chemical hand warmers, etc. to keep them warm at night.

Don't count on hot water all day. Usually you can get a warm shower if you time your shower right.

Check to see how your hotel bill can be paid. SOME hotels will only take their country's currency; no credit cards. Check with your team leader regarding payment options.

BATHROOM CONCERNS

In South America toilet paper is **NOT** provided in most restrooms. Carry an abundant supply. Kleenex packets work well. Toilet paper is usually provided at the hosting hospital however.

DO NOT put toilet paper down the toilet. Use the trashcan provided in each stall.

Soap is rarely provided. Bring your own hand sanitizer. Think about this when you are shaking hands with people and getting ready to eat.

ELECTRICITY

Most everyday appliances in the United States run on 110 volts. Ovens run on 220 volts.

Most of **Ecuador** runs on 110 volts.

Most of **Peru** runs on 220 volts. If you bring appliances, bring an adapter.

SECURITY

Always protect and secure your valuables. If possible, don't take any valuables. You may want to leave your wedding ring at home and wear a more modest ring.

Avoid going out by yourself. We've had group members walking together in the streets and a local person has tried to reach into a person's pocket. Be careful and alert.

FOOD/WATER/DIGESTIVE ISSUES

It's always safer to drink bottled water and avoid local water sources. Don't drink liquids with ice cubes since they're most likely made from tap water. Brush your teeth with bottled water.

For raw food, if you can't peel it, don't eat it. Stay away from salad bars and buffets unless they're at a very reputable hotel. It's common for a team member on a trip to have a digestive problem. Be careful.

If you do get digestive problems follow the following course of action:

- 1) Take Pepto Bismol tablets or liquid.
- 2) If you have diarrhea, take Immodium. In Peru, Bactrin Forte is much more effective.
- 3) If Immodium doesn't work, take Lomotol. (You need a prescription. Someone usually has some on the trip.)
- 4) If Lomotol doesn't work or you have a fever, chills or no improvement in 24 hours, take Bactrin Forte, Cipro or Levaquin. In Peru Bactrin Forte has been much more effective than Cipro.

PHONE

It's OK to bring your cell phone and charger.

Consider arranging for long distance ahead of time to save money on calls. Calling cards can work well.

There are little phone cabanas (cabins) available in most big cities. Their rates are usually good and clearly posted.

E-MAIL/INTERNET

Large cities usually have internet cafes. Nice hotels have capabilities, but availability may be a problem. Coya, Peru doesn't have internet access through cafes; however, Pisac does.

NAMETAG

Nametags would be greatly appreciated by the host hospital or clinic staff. Your team leader may already have these.

MUSIC & ALARM CLOCK

Bring your iPod or MP3 Player. Some people like to take an alarm clock.

PICTURES

Feel free to bring your camera to take lots of pictures. If focusing on an individual, please ask their permission. If you share photos, please delete all the out of focus and unusable/unrecognizable pictures. Some people make PowerPoint presentations and that will help them sort their pictures.

If you share your pictures using a CD, please use a RW (read/write) CD so that others can access and edit the pictures. It's frustrating to have several sideways pictures in your collection that can't be turned the correct way on the disk.

If you can get before and after pictures of the patients, they are great to post on the website.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Go to the Salem Hospital SHAPES Travel Clinic for complete details or go to the Center for Disease Control website for specific requirements.

YELLOW FEVER

Check to see if the site you are going to requires a yellow fever vaccination.

The vaccination process takes several weeks to develop the antibody. Get your vaccination early.

You may get a yellow fever vaccination at SHAPES at the Salem Hospital. It costs a little over \$100.

MALARIA CONCERNS

The following is information about medicine that may be needed to deal with the possibility of malaria. Consult your trip leader to determine if malaria is a possibility. Consult your health care provider regarding which medication would be best for you. The following are possible medications.

1. **Larium (Mefloquin)** : Drug of choice 1/wk starting 2 week before embarkation and continue for 4 weeks after return (8 tablets total) cost about \$60

Contraindications: History of epilepsy, active or recent depression, anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, etc. 1:200 to 1:500 users may have nightmares, insomnia, irritability, emotional liability or depression

2. **Malarone:** 1/day, starting the day before departure and continuing for 1 week after return (21 tablets) cost about \$8/tablet

Contraindications: Pregnancy, renal disease. Avoid concomitant use of Rifampin, Tetracycline, Metoclopramide.

3. **Doxicycline:** start the day of travel, continue for 4 weeks after return. Cost is minimal.

Side effects: Photosensitivity, yeast infections, hyperacidity & GERD (reflux).

HEPATITIS A AND B

Your vaccination should be current.

TYPHOID

Your vaccination should be current.

TETANUS

Your vaccination should be current.

INSECT REPELLANT

If you're in a tropical area, bring insect repellent.

GETTING OR RENEWING YOUR PASSPORT

(revised 1-22-07)

GETTING A NEW PASSPORT

website for application form: http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds11/ds11_842.html

1) Obtain the following items:

2 photos of yourself - these will be your pictures on your passport. Kinkos takes pictures.
proof of citizenship - a birth certificate works perfectly
valid photo identification - your driver's license works perfectly

2) Go to an authorized passport agency. In Salem you could go to:

Main Post Office on 25th street
Marion County Clerk, 100 High St. NE, Suite 1331

3) Pay about \$100, fill out the application form, take some type of oath, and mail items.

RENEWING YOUR PASSPORT

It's generally OK to renew your passport by mail as long as it's not damaged. For details and forms about renewing your passport, go to the following website:

http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/renew/renew_833.html