

**CAPITOL CITY MEDICAL TEAMS**  
**GENERAL TRIP NOTES**  
(revised 12-7-14)

**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/FINANCES**

**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.

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.

It is **NOT** recommended that you check your financial information on free wireless networks or at an internet café.

Have emergency phone numbers for all your credit cards stored in a separate location from your credit card in case you need to report a lost card. Otherwise, when your card is gone, so is the emergency contact number.

Couples traveling together should have separate credit card accounts. That way, if one card is lost, the couple will still have a valid card.

**MAXIMUM DAILY DEDUCTIBLE EXPENSES**

EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE IRS PER DIEM RATES, TEAM MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO TURN IN RECEIPTS FOR ALL MEALS AND LODGING. IN THE EVENT A RESTAURANT DOES NOT PROVIDE A RECEIPT, TEAM MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO NOTE THE PRICE, INCLUDING TIP, IF ANY, AND SUBMIT THE ACTUAL EXPENSE. THE INFORMATION BELOW SIMPLY INFORMS TEAM MEMBERS THERE ARE LIMITS TO HOW MUCH CAN BE DEDUCTED FOR MEALS, LODGING AND INCIDENTALS.

The IRS does have a maximum dollar amount you can deduct for international daily expenses. The amount is based on what the Bureau of Administration of the US Department of State sets for international daily expenses. You can find these amounts at:

[http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem\\_action.asp?](http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem_action.asp?)

Select Travel (at the top of the menu) and Select foreign per diem rates.

Then select Foreign Per Diem Rates by Location (Near the top of the document)

Select the country you are interested in

**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. Check with your team leader about this possibility.

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 one check-in bag 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 a list of 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. Their sewage "system" is not able to process the paper. 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.

It is NOT recommended that you check your financial information on free wireless networks or at an internet café.

### **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. The information about vaccinations may change.**

### **YELLOW FEVER**

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

You need to get this vaccine at least 10 days before you leave the country.

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. Doxycycline:** 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.

The vaccination should be given at least two weeks before leaving the country.

#### **TETANUS**

Your vaccination should be current.

#### **INSECT REPELLANT**

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

## **GETTING OR RENEWING YOUR PASSPORT**

(revised 5-3-10)

### **GETTING A NEW PASSPORT**

The Website for application form: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds11/ds11\\_842.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds11/ds11_842.html) or you could just Google Renew or get your passport.

- 1) Obtain the following items:
  - 2 photos of yourself - these will be your pictures on your passport. Walgreens, Office Depot, Costco, Kinkos, and other companies take 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](http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/renew/renew_833.html)