General Travel Advice

Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home, and always stay alert and aware of your surroundings.

Keep family and friends informed of your itinerary, and communicate regularly throughout the trip.

Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at http://travel.state.gov/

Become a member of International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT) at http://www.iamat.org

Register your trip with the International Studies Office, if it is for credit or funded by UVA.

Food and Water Illnesses

Eat
Food that is cooked and served hot.
Hard-cooked eggs.
Fruits and vegetables you have washed in clean water or peeled yourself.
Pasteurized dairy products.

Don’t Eat
Food served at room temperature.
Food from street vendors.
Raw or soft-cooked (runny) eggs. Raw or undercooked (rare) meat or fish.
Unwashed or unpeeled raw fruit and vegetables, including salsas and chutneys.
Unpasteurized dairy products.
“Bushmeat” (monkeys, bats, or other wild game).

Drink
Bottled water that is sealed
Water that has been disinfected.
Ice made with bottled or disinfected water.
Carbonated drinks in cans and bottles (no fountain drinks).
Hot coffee or tea.
Pasteurized milk.

Don’t Drink
Tap or well water.
Ice made with tap or well water.
Drinks made with tap or well water (such as reconstituted juice or fountain sodas).
Unpasteurized milk and cheeses.

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of healthy US citizens in foreign countries.
Travelers’ Diarrhea

Prevention:
Pepto-Bismol®: 2 chewable tablets 4 times per day. Side effects: blackening of tongue and stool; may cause nausea, constipation, and rarely tinnitus (ringing in the ears). Contraindicated with aspirin allergy and in some medical conditions.

Treatment:
Mild symptoms: Rehydrate with bottled water and electrolytes (bring oral rehydration salts with you or obtain abroad).
Moderate symptoms: If no fever or blood in stool, consider Imodium®. Rehydrate as above.
Severe symptoms: Self-treatment with antibiotics and Imodium® can limit the duration of severe illness in most cases.
Rehydrate well. Antibiotics can increase the risk for colonization of resistant organisms. May cause drug interactions with your routine medications. Check with the pharmacist. If you start antibiotics, stop them as soon as diarrhea is resolved.

Ciprofloxacin: One 500 mg tablet twice daily for 1-3 days (may increase risk for tendonitis)
Azithromycin: (For South Asia and Southeast Asia) Two 250mg tabs once a day for 1-3 days

Violence and Theft

Avoid travel to areas of conflict or political unrest; avoid participating in local demonstrations. Travel with a companion or group. Stay in secure accommodations and use a safety deposit box. Carry minimal amounts of money; a hidden money belt may be useful for holding passports and larger amounts of money. Do not wear expensive watches or jewelry. Never accept food or drink from strangers, and do not leave drinks unattended because of the risk of “spiking”. Ensure that cars are roadworthy and can be locked securely.

Environmental Related Illnesses

Wear protective clothing, high factor sunscreen (reapplied regularly), and insect repellent (also reapplied as directed). Always apply sunscreen before repellent. Carry a first aid kit and know how to use it (see our travel checklist). Carry an adequate supply of water and high energy snacks. Carry a flashlight for walking at night. Check shoes and clothes carefully for spiders, scorpions... Beware of coral and jellyfish; SafeSea® Lotion to prevent jellyfish stings. Avoid swallowing water when swimming. Untreated water can carry germs that make you sick. To prevent parasitic infections, wear shoes on beaches, where there may be animal waste.

Traveling with medications

Keep medications in their original container in your carry-on luggage. Keep enough of a supply for your entire trip; take into account possible travel delays. You may need to ask your insurance company for a vacation supply of medication.

Traveling with narcotics, psychotropic medications and injectable medications/needles may cause problems at border crossings in some countries, such as Japan and United Arab Emirates. Be aware that many countries permit taking only a 30-day supply of certain medicines and require carrying a prescription or doctor’s letter. Ensure that the letter is clearly labelled (preferably translated in the language understood at your destination) with your full passport name, doctor’s name, generic and brand name, and exact dosage. This will facilitate border crossing and help the attending physician abroad.

Travel and Mental Health

Travel can be extremely stressful. Lack of familiar support systems, unexpected situations, and language barriers can intensify stress. Travel stress can trigger or exacerbate underlying mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression. If you have a history of mental health issues, talk to your care provider to discuss if the type of travel you are planning is appropriate for you. It may not be the best time to stop or to adjust medications before your trip. Before traveling, you may need to find a mental health professional at your destination who speaks your language to ensure continuity of care.

Do not swim in freshwater in developing areas or where sanitation is poor.

Infections such as schistosomiasis and leptospirosis can be transmitted through fresh water.
WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BITTEN

To reduce risk of rabies, if you get bitten or scratched by an animal while traveling abroad:

Wash wound copiously with soap and water for a minimum of 15 minutes. Apply Betadine® or other antiseptic.
If pre-immunized, find modern rabies vaccine.
If not pre-immunized, try to find out if HRIG is available.
If HRIG not available, travel to nearest place where it is available; begin vaccine series as soon as possible; RIG can be given up to seven days after the start of the rabies vaccine series.

Keep away from animals

Most animals avoid people, but they may attack if they feel threatened, are protecting their young or territory, or if they are injured or ill. Animal bites and scratches can lead to serious diseases such as rabies.
Do not touch or feed any animals you do not know. Do not allow animals to lick open wounds, and do not get animal saliva in your eyes or mouth.
If you wake in a room with a bat, seek medical care immediately.
Avoid live bird and poultry markets. Rabies vaccine may still be required after a possible rabies exposure, regardless of previous rabies shots. Seek medical evaluation as soon as possible.

Avoid petting wild dogs as they can pose a serious rabies risk.

Insect Borne Diseases

Bugs (including mosquitoes, ticks, and some flies) can spread diseases such as malaria, yellow fever, zika, dengue fever, and Japanese encephalitis, to name only a few. Many of these insect borne diseases cannot be prevented with a vaccine or medicine. You can reduce your risk by taking steps to prevent bug bites.

Malaria Prevention

If the CDC considers malaria a risk at your destination, it is always important to take malaria prophylaxis and avoid bug bites. Locals or other travelers may minimize the risk of malaria based on anecdotal information and not recommend medication. However, the risk varies from region to region and from traveler to traveler, within the same country. Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness.

Avoid Bug Bites

An insect repellent with at least 20% DEET or Picaridin can protect against mosquitoes and ticks. Insect repellents with the following active ingredients protect against mosquitoes only (but not ticks): Oil of lemon eucalyptus or PMD, IR3525.

Make sure to read directions and reapply as directed to maintain effectiveness. Repellents containing a higher percentage of the active ingredient typically provide longer-lasting protection. Regardless of what product you use, if you start to get insect bites, reapply the repellent according to the label instructions.
When using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second. Consider using permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents); you can buy items already treated or can treat them yourself. Do not use permethrin directly on skin.
Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
Stay and sleep in screened or air-conditioned rooms.
Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors.
To prevent tick bites, tuck in shirts, tuck pants into socks, and wear closed shoes instead of sandals.

Mosquito repellents protect against malaria, dengue and chikungunya.

Malaria prophylactic medications (check with pharmacy for cost with your insurance)*

Chloroquine: One 500mg tablet once a week; start one week before travel to region with malaria, take every week while at risk, and for four weeks after leaving at risk area. May worsen psoriasis.
Malarone: One tablet once daily; start one to two days before travel to region with malaria, every day while in at risk area, and for 7 days after leaving at risk area. Do not take if pregnant, severe kidney disease, or allergic.
Doxycycline: One 100mg once daily; start one to two days before travel to region with malaria, every day while in at risk area, and for 28 days after. Side effects can include:
• Sunburn (wear sunscreen)
• Nausea/stomach pain if taken on empty stomach (take with food)
• Pill can get lodged in esophagus (take with full glass of water and don’t lie down within one hour),
• Vaginal yeast infection (bring over-the-counter medication for yeast infection)
• Do not take if pregnant or allergic.

*most insurance plans will not pre-authorize malaria prophylaxis, only treatment

Take all bites seriously and seek immediate medical care even if you are told the risk is low.
Be a Responsible Traveler

Be informed: educate yourself about a host country’s life styles and cultural codes. Learn some basic phrases. Respect local customs: the way you dress, behavior at religious sites, public displays of affection.

Avoid exploitation: travelers may be perceived as rich, so avoid obvious displays of wealth or handing out money as this may build resentment. Support the local community economically and tip generously, if acceptable. Bargain, if acceptable, but avoid aggressive bargaining, as people’s livelihoods depend on sales. Avoid and denounce exploitation of locals (low salaries, child prostitution and sex travel).

Protect the environment: reuse towels and bed sheets, avoid overuse of water, wasting food and littering.

Traveler’s Thrombosis/DVT Risk

In susceptible individuals, prolonged immobility during flying can increase the risk of blood clots in the legs, known as DVTs or traveler’s thrombosis. This can be serious and occasionally life threatening, if the blood clot breaks off and travels to the lungs, causing a pulmonary embolism.

During long flights:
- Wear loose clothing; avoid tight restrictive garments.
- Stretch and periodically exercise your feet and ankles, even while seated; pump the calves and take breaks by walking down the aisle.
- Keep yourself hydrated by drinking water while minimizing alcohol and caffeinated beverages.
- Consult your physician if you have a long flight and an underlying illness, such as recent surgery, cancer, blood clotting disorder or previous DVT.

Air Pollution

Before you leave, find out where you can access local air quality alerts:
- AIRNow (International Air Quality)
- WHO Exposure to Outdoor Air Pollution

Heed warnings to stay indoors during high smog alert days and avoid strenuous or extreme physical activity.

Travel Lowers Inhibitions...

Alcohol and drugs further lower inhibitions and increase the risk for injury and diseases, including STIs.

- Limit alcohol use
- Avoid drug use
- Use condoms or consider abstinence

Situational tolerance: drinking in a new environment can cause you to become more intoxicated than usual with the same number of drinks.

Some drinks may have a higher alcohol content than what you are used to.

Drug use while abroad (even “soft” drugs, like marijuana) has been associated with acute psychosis in young people.

Sexually Transmitted Infections: There is a higher baseline risk of HIV in many parts of the world. There is also a greater risk for multidrug resistant infections such as gonorrhea.

Jet Lag

CROSSING several time zones can lead to an abrupt change in your body clock, called jet lag. Jet lag can lead to fatigue as well as disturbances of sleep and digestion. For short trips, try to keep to your home local time. For longer trips, try to adapt as quickly as possible to the new time zone. Avoid important meetings or starting your adventure soon after arrival, including renting a vehicle to drive. Staying well hydrated, avoiding alcohol, smaller meals before and during flight, and melatonin may all help with jet lag symptoms, but there is no magic cure and much research is still being done.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is the most common type of travel stress, especially during extended travel; it can be overwhelming, but it is normal, and know that it will pass.

Talk to friends, family, or your advisor for support.

Be open-minded, patient, and flexible.

Other resources for the student traveler

List of more detailed handouts available at Student Health and on our website

- Animal Risks/Rabies Vaccine
- Travel Insurance
- Travel Checklist
- Marine Toxins and Bites
- Insect Protection
- Water Disinfection
- Altitude Illness
- Diving Injuries

Useful Links:
- Translation Cards for Food & Drug Allergies, Special Diets and Medical Needs: http://www.selectwisely.com/
- If you are planning to drive internationally: ASIRT (Association for Safe International Road Travel)
- Free CDC Apps:
- TravWell
- Can I Eat This?
Travel Clinic Product Order Sheet:

Insecticide (to be applied to clothing and gear, not to skin)


Insect Repellants (to be applied to skin)

DEET Based Insect Repellants


Picaridin Based Insect Repellents


Oral Rehydration Salts


Water Purification Tablets


Chlorine Dioxide Tablets


Iodine Tablets


PRICES ABOVE DO NOT INCLUDE TAX.

*Turn completed sheets in to Joyce Rensch to be billed to student account.