

Staying Healthy

Because many of our trips are into foreign countries and/or unusual cultures, it is important to remember that we should take some precautions in order to remain healthy. The following are some tips from past experiences. Read over the list and apply them to yourself as you see fit for your particular situation.

1. Bring sunscreen, a hat, and do not work without a shirt. The sun in many places you will be going will be much more severe than you are use to. Sunburns can incapacitate you for days, so take caution.
2. In foreign countries, do not just go swimming in fresh water without first asking your missionary host. There are parasites that live in fresh water bodies in third world countries that could eventually kill you. These parasites enter through your skin.
3. Do not walk around with bare feet at any time, and if you have to dig a lot in the soil with your hands, wear gloves. Hookworms enter through bare skin. Hookworm is a parasite.
4. Do not eat lettuce or green leafy vegetables in foreign countries unless boiled or cooked. The general rule about food (especially in the rural areas of foreign countries) is this: If you cannot peel it (i.e. bananas, oranges) or boil it, throw it away. Do not eat any vegetables or fruit raw unless you wash it and then peel it.
5. **Water:** Always ask your host. Remember, if the water is bad, you can not brush your teeth with it, nor can you have ice in your soft drinks. Watch out for dehydration; it can be more serious than catching a parasite. Do not drink water after a typhoon or flooding. FYI: Some bottled drinks (local) may not be sterile.
6. Diarrhea is to be expected. Even the slight changes that result when you go to parts of the United States can result in intestinal disturbances. To control diarrhea, the medications recommended are: Imodium AD, Paracetamol or Lomotil. The latter two are prescription drugs.
7. **EVERY TEAM MEMBER IS REQUIRED TO BE CURRENT ON THEIR TETANUS SHOT**
8. Other shots may be required in foreign countries. Typhoid, Typhus, Cholera, Yellow Fever, Hepatitis A. Anti-malarial pills may also be required.
9. Bring a few band-aids, anti-bacterial ointment, etc. in your suitcase.
10. If you swim in salt water, watch out for dangers that we do not have here at home. Spiny urchins, jellyfish that sting, and Man-of-War are common in tropical waters. Be very careful when swimming.
11. Never antagonize animals or insects, they can and will hurt you. Tarantulas and scorpions are usually not deadly, but they can hurt you big time. Black-widow spiders, fire ants, and killer bees are very dangerous. Treat them with respect. Remember we may not be close to an emergency medical facility.
12. If you have allergies, prepare before you go by bringing medication that you might need.
13. A small supply of antibiotics prescribed by your doctor could be very helpful to fight any infection. Be sure to bring receipts of prescription drugs or the actual prescription itself. Leave all prescriptions in original bottles. Also, bring along some aspirin, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, etc that you might need. It is best to carry all prescriptions in your carry-on bag when you travel.
14. Don't take any unnecessary risks! You are most valuable to the team when you are healthy.