

While Studying Abroad: Taking Care of Your Health

Scheduling an appointment with your primary care provider (PCP) at the University Health Service prior to leaving the university is a good idea even if your program does not require you to do so. You may find it helpful to talk with your PCP about your health concerns, diet/nutrition concerns, prescription renewals, and other questions you may have. Female students may want to schedule an annual gynecological exam before going abroad.

To schedule an appointment at UHS, call 275-2662. It will be helpful to let the receptionist know you will be studying abroad and are scheduling a pre-departure health visit.

TRAVEL IMMUNIZATIONS

Many countries require you to have specific immunizations before coming into the country. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (www.cdc.gov/travel/) tells which immunizations are required for every country. Travel advisories are also listed on this site.

If you need immunizations before you travel, you can receive them at UHS. There will be a charge for the immunizations, but not for the visit to UHS. You may prefer to go to your physician at home, to your county health department, to Passport Health (located in Helen Wood Hall across from the Medical Center), or to another health care facility. You may want to inquire about the cost when you call to schedule. Since some immunizations require more than one visit or cannot be taken in combination with others, it is recommended that you take care of your immunizations well in advance of your departure.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All full-time UR students must have health insurance coverage while studying abroad. You can enroll in the Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) insurance plan offered through UHS, or you can remain on your parent's or your own health insurance. You will want to have adequate health insurance coverage while abroad. Students who will be studying abroad must complete the online Health Insurance Selection process before the start of the semester or year in which they will begin their program. The link is on the UHS web site at www.rochester.edu/uhs.

The University-sponsored BCBS plan provides coverage for hospitalization, surgery, and diagnostic lab tests anywhere in the world. Visits to a doctor's office are not covered by the plan. If you are on another insurance plan, it is a good idea to check your coverage outside the U.S. before you begin your study abroad. We recommend carrying your insurance card with you at all times.

UHS CAN HELP YOU

All full-time students have a primary care provider (PCP) at UHS. When you are abroad, you can communicate with your PCP through the UHS web site ([Contact Us](#)). Contacting UHS can help you with general health questions, not replace or provide direct care you may need while abroad. When sending a message to UHS, it would be helpful if you mention that you are abroad.

It is likely you will have at least one cold while you are abroad. For suggestions for caring for cold symptoms, check [Cold Self Care](#) in Health Topics. You will find recommendations for caring for a sore throat, cough, nasal congestion, and fever. Taking medications that work for you would be a good idea.

The UHS web site provides immediate access to information on several health topics, as well as links to reputable health-related web sites. Check "Health Topics" on www.rochester.edu/uhs.

ITEMS TO TAKE WITH YOU

(See following page for more information.)

If you have a known and ongoing medical problem, such as allergies or diabetes, take special precautions in preparing for and managing your situation overseas. Living in a new environment, along with the stresses of studying abroad, can have an impact on your health. Scheduling an appointment with your UHS primary care provider and/or your doctor at home prior to departure will help you anticipate and prepare for medical situations that could arise while you are abroad. To schedule an appointment at UHS, call 275-2662.

Bringing information from your medical record when you study abroad is recommended. It is advisable to carry these documents in a place that is both secure and accessible by you at all times while traveling. Be sure to make a photocopy of your medical records in case of loss.

We recommend bringing a supply of any prescription medicines you currently take to last you throughout your stay. If you have over-the-counter (OTC) remedies that work well for you, it is a good idea to take a supply with you rather than assume you will be able to purchase the same medicine abroad. For customs purposes, keep all medicines (prescription and over-the-counter) in the original containers. You might want to bring a small first aid kit with you. A list of recommended items to pack in a first aid kit is on the following page.

YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH

Taking care of your personal health will help you have an enjoyable and successful time studying abroad. Living in another culture often entails a change in diet, different expectations about alcohol consumption, and stresses from living in a new place and culture.

Check [Your Personal Health While Studying Abroad](#) for suggestions related to:

- Nutrition
- Cold Self Care (and the Flu)
- Alcohol & Other Drug Use
- Sexual Health
- Your Emotional Health (Culture shock, dealing with stress, and coping strategies)

LINKS

Center for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov/travel

World Health Organization
www.who.int/

Travel Health Online
www.tripprep.com/

Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad
<http://travel.state.gov/Publications/medical.html>

Mdtravelhealth.com
<http://www.mdtravelhealth.com/>

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ITEMS TO TAKE WITH YOU

MEDICATIONS

Prescription Medications: If you are taking a prescription medication (including birth control pills), bring a supply to last you throughout your time abroad. Prescription medications vary in name, potency, and purity from country to country and cannot be sent through international mails. Keep the medications in the original container(s) and carry any medications you take daily in a carry-on bag in case your luggage is misplaced while traveling. It is also wise to bring the written drug information provided by your pharmacy with you through customs in case the officer has questions about your medication. If you have questions about your prescription medications, ask your primary care provider and/or a pharmacist for advice.

Non-prescription (OTC) Medications: If you have over-the-counter (OTC) remedies you prefer, it is a good idea to take a supply with you rather than assume you will be able to purchase the same medicine abroad. Keep all medicines (prescription or over-the-counter) in the original containers. If you bring syringes with you, be sure to bring a doctor's note since syringes could be construed as drug paraphernalia.

YOUR MEDICAL RECORD

Bringing information from your medical record when you study abroad is recommended. Carry these documents in a place that is both secure and accessible by you at all times while traveling. Be sure to make a photocopy of your medical records in case of loss.

We suggest bringing:

- Medications you are currently taking.
- List of chronic illness, allergies, and hypersensitivities.
- Your immunization history.
- Your blood type (if available)
- Your eyeglass and/or contact prescription.
- The name of your PCP at UHS and at home.
- The name and policy number of your health insurance company.

FIRST AID KIT

You may want to bring a small first aid kit with you. The availability of specific over-the-counter drugs and hygiene products is uncertain in other countries. Many of these products will have different brands in the countries you will be traveling to, so it is a good idea to have what you need for the duration of your stay before you leave home.

| RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A FIRST AID KIT | |
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| Symptom/Problem | Items to Consider Bringing |
| Pain or fever | Acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol), Ibuprofen (e.g., Advil, Motrin), or Aspirin |
| Allergies, ease the itch from insect bites or stings, and for motion sickness | An antihistamine (e.g., Benadryl) |
| Diarrhea | Loperamide (e.g., Imodium) |
| Minor injuries | Bandages and band-aids |
| Cuts | Antiseptic, e.g., povidone-iodine (e.g., Betadine) Antibacterial (e.g., Neosporin) |
| Ease irritation from bites & stings | Calamine lotion or 'AfterBite' |
| Cold Symptoms Check Health Topics on the UHS web site (www.rochester.edu/uhs) for help managing common cold symptoms. | Acetaminophen or ibuprofen Throat lozenges for sore throat Cough suppressants (e.g. Robitussin DM) Decongestant (e.g., Sudafed) |
| Sexual Health | Condoms Contraceptives (If you are taking birth control pills, bring enough for the duration of your stay.) |
| <i>A few other things to consider:</i> | Multivitamins (especially for long trips when dietary vitamin intake may be inadequate) Feminine hygiene products Insect repellent Sunscreen and chapstick Scissors and tweezers (packed in your suitcase) If you wear glasses or contacts: a copy of your prescription and an extra pair of glasses or contacts. If you wear a Medic Alert bracelet, wear it at all times. If you carry a card, carry it with you. |