

General Health Issues

You will quickly learn that there are definite precautions to be taken. In countries where flies abound, there is the danger of dysentery. Contaminated seafood may bring a case of hepatitis. Milk products are not carefully processed in some places and may harbor harmful bacteria. Find out from your command's health care facility whether water may be drunk from the tap, whether salad greens may be eaten without washing with a disinfectant, whether seafood may be eaten and whether local dairy products are approved. Our bodies don't adjust automatically to some foods in other countries; some people may never have trouble, others may be continually plagued.

Experiencing a country means not just admiring its visual attractions but enjoying its culinary art as well. Be aware, however, that eating the unique food and even more important, drinking the local water, may introduce your body to bacteria it is not used to. The result may be diarrhea. Because this type of upset is so common, it pays to go slowly when trying new varieties of food, oil used in quantity for cooking, hot curries and other exotic preparations until you get used to them. On the other hand, don't be so afraid of germs that you don't even try native foods. Just follow sensible rules of health. It would be a shame to bypass the richness of foods over the world. Do sample and experiment, but check first before taking a chance.



Check immediately on the number and kinds of immunizations required for the region to which you are going. Get them and have them properly recorded. Give yourself plenty of time. Traveling on a transoceanic flight while suffering the after effects of a half dozen varied immunizations can be very unpleasant.

Sensible Precautions



If you do become ill and are not near American doctors or facilities, seek advice from the Embassy or Consulate. They will undoubtedly recommend a reputable doctor. Local drugstores (or pharmacies) carry many of our products which you can ask for by name. Use your dictionary if you don't see what you want. But don't take any medicines unless they have been prescribed by a competent physician.

When you go touring, it is wise to equip yourself with items such as aspirin, cold tablets, a thermometer, bandages, mosquito repellent and first aid creams. These can help you temporarily until you can get proper medical attention.

Medications



If you take special medications, it is advisable to carry a three month supply with you as well as the written prescription, because the medical facility at your new duty station may not carry your specific medication in their pharmacy. Three months allows enough time to make arrangements for ordering your medication or finding a substitute.

Be sure that your family's medical and dental records are up-to-date and carry them with you on the airplane.

Some Tips Before You Transfer



It is a good idea to take care of known problems before your transfer -- don't wait. While there is no need to be overly concerned with medical care, it is worth the time to check

with FSC RAP or your clinic about overseas facilities if you have special needs. For example, routine dental care is obtainable at most overseas commands on a space-available basis, but orthodonture is available only at major dental centers, subject to current directives. FSC RAP or your local clinic will know these. If you have an elderly parent living with you who is not a dependent, you will have to provide for his/her medical needs by using local health care providers at your own expense.

Be sure that your family's medical and dental records are up-to-date and carry them with you on the plane.

If you or other members of your family wear glasses, have replacement pairs made before you leave. Be sure to bring with you all up-to-date lens prescriptions.

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