

Where to Go for Help

For travel outside of the United States, be sure to contact the State Department at www.state.gov for travel warnings, travel alerts and emergency information.

Register your travel plans with the State Department through a free online service at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>



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Articles in this newsletter are not a substitute for the care and advice of medical professionals. When you have a question or need medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, consult your physician.

This newsletter is produced by Inova Health System in conjunction with your faith community. If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please notify the appropriate personnel in your faith community.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit health care system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services including emergency and urgent care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health, blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community we serve through excellence in patient care, education and research.

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For Your Health

Traveling Abroad

Many students and families travel during school breaks and holidays to enjoy new cultures and climates abroad.

For most people, international travel can be a very enjoyable adventure. However, for some the trip can become very frustrating.

It is a good idea to plan your trip in advance and research as much information as possible about the location, the people, customs, culture and climate.

Be aware of the effects a different local climate may have on you. If you are sensitive to altitude or to humidity, you may wish to consult with your physician. Also, be sure to pack a change of clothing and a light jacket in your carry on luggage in case you need to change, or your bags are delayed.

As you are making travel plans, be sure not to over-book your schedule. Plan some down time so you can rest and recuperate before and after long drives or plane, train or boat rides.

The additional physical activity undertaken during travel can be quite strenuous, and sudden changes in diet and climate can have serious health consequences for the unprepared traveler.

Typical Concerns While Traveling

Traveling With Disabilities

Individual countries have their own standards of accessibility for disabled travelers. Some countries have nondiscrimination laws that help to protect travelers with disabilities, while other countries do not.

Travelers with disabilities should review the Department of Transportation pamphlets *New Horizons for the Air Traveler with a Disability* and *Plane Talk: Facts for Passengers With Disabilities*. Both of these publications are available at the Department of Transportation's website <http://www.dot.gov>.

Many countries have restrictions on what may be brought into the country, including food, pets and medications. Even some over-the-counter medications may be prohibited in some countries.

Allergies to New Environments

When traveling, be sure to familiarize yourself with conditions of the place you are visiting.

If you have allergies, or reactions to certain medications, foods, insect bites, or other unique medical problems, you may consider wearing a "medical alert" bracelet.

You may also consider carrying a letter from your physician explaining required treatment should you become ill.

If an American citizen becomes seriously ill or injured abroad, a U.S. consular officer can assist in locating medical services and informing family or friends. If necessary, a consular officer can also assist in the transfer of funds from the United States

How to Prepare in Advance

- **Sign passport, and fill in the emergency information:** Make sure you have a signed, valid passport, and a visa, if required. Don't forget to fill in the emergency information page of your passport.
- **Make copies of itinerary and passport:** Leave copies of your itinerary, passport and visas with family or friends; so you can be contacted in case of an emergency.
- **Check your medical insurance coverage:** Ask your medical insurance company if your policy applies overseas, and if it covers emergency expenses such as medical evacuation. If it does not, consider supplemental insurance. Obtaining medical treatment and hospital care abroad can be expensive, and medical evacuation to the U.S. can cost more than \$50,000.
- **Take precautions to avoid being a target of crime:** Do not wear conspicuous clothing or jewelry and do not carry excessive amounts of money. Also, do not leave unattended luggage in public areas. Do not accept packages from strangers!
- **Know where to go in an emergency:** Consular personnel at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens. Contact information for U.S. Embassies and Consulates appears on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website at <http://travel.state.gov>.
- **Check with your health care provider:** You may need to receive necessary immunizations that are recommended by the Department of State.