

UNIVERSITY STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES • Fact Sheet

INFORMATION FOR SAFE TRAVELING

Please review CDC updates on COVID-19 travel health recommendations at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

Before Your Trip

1. Make a travel appointment at least 6 weeks prior to your trip by calling University Student Health Services (USHS) at 804-828-8828. Let them know you are making the appointment for travel as this must be scheduled with a travel clinician.
 - If a physical exam form needs to be completed for your trip, let them know this when you set up the appointment, and fill out your portion of the form prior to your visit.
 - You will also receive an online form from Student Health to complete prior to the appointment. Know the specifics of your itinerary, including timing and location in each country, as vaccine requirements often vary depending on where you will be traveling in each country.

If you prefer to make your travel appointment off-campus, USHS can provide information about travel providers in the Richmond area. You can also contact your health insurance provider for participating travel specialists.

2. Review destination information.
 - Destination health and vaccine information can be found at the [Centers for Disease Control](#) and [World Health Organization](#) websites.
 - Destination demographics, climate, safety, and travel advisories can be found online at the [CIA World Factbook](#), [Lonely Planet](#), [US State Department](#) (includes travel warnings), and the [UK's Foreign & Commonwealth Office](#).
3. If you are participating in a study abroad program, enroll in [VCU's international health and emergency assistance insurance plan](#) with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI).
 - The CISI insurance plan covers health care costs incurred during university-sponsored international travel and provides emergency assistance, including medical or security evacuations and repatriation of remains. Click on the link for [full plan details](#).
 - Once enrolled, download the [myCISI mobile app](#) and carry a paper copy of the insurance card with you. Familiarize yourself with the [CISI coverage and instructions](#) on how to use the insurance while abroad.
4. If you are not participating in a study abroad program, apply for the [International Student ID \(ISIC\) card](#). The ISIC card is available to all full-time students. Part-time students ages 31 and under can apply for the International Youth Travel Card. Benefits include discounts on travel insurance and flights, as well as information on medical services worldwide. For an explanation of what travel insurance covers and a comparison of policies, go to www.travelinsurancereview.net.
5. Research diver's insurance if you plan on scuba diving. [Divers Alert Network \(DAN\)](#) offers travel, dive, accident, and dive equipment insurance. A variety of services are included with a \$40/year membership.
6. Review your health insurance coverage. If you have health insurance, find out about coverage in other countries.

7. Research medical services available to you in case of illness/injury or if you have a medical condition.
 - If you are in a study abroad program, learn about the health care resources at your host university and host community. Some universities have their own Student Health clinics while others can provide a list of recommended doctors/clinics in the community where you can use your [CISI insurance](#).
 - If you purchase [CISI insurance through VCU](#) or the [ISIC card](#), you will have access to a directory of medical services worldwide. You can also see which medical services have English speaking staff. Both CISI and ISIC offer mobile apps.
 - The U.S. Embassy can also assist in finding English-speaking medical providers. Visit www.usembassy.gov, choose your destination and the embassy office, click on “US Citizen Services”, scroll to “Local Resources”, then click on “Medical Assistance”.
 - Another travel app to consider is [Allianz TravelSmart by Allianz Global Assistance](#). No purchase is necessary to download the app.
8. If you have a medical condition that may require follow-up while traveling, obtain a medical summary from your health care provider that includes a list of your medications and dosages. It is best to translate this into the primary language of your destination and bring both the English and translated copies with you. The [International Drug Name Database](#) lists the names of many U.S. medications and the equivalent international drug name.
9. Register with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at the U.S. State Department. This free service provides safety updates and helps the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency.
10. Insure valuables, including cameras, laptops, and tablets. Do not take anything you can't afford to have lost or stolen.
11. Review airport security and luggage information provided by the [Transportation Safety Administration \(TSA\)](#). Be familiar with TSA requirements, especially if you are traveling with prescription medications. Carry all of your medicines (including over-the-counter drugs) in your carry-on bags in their original packages.
12. Stock up on insect repellents, especially if you are traveling to a malaria-risk area. The most effective ones are DEET (35% or greater) and picaridin. Detailed information on these products can be found in the USHS brochure [“Travel Medications”](#). If you will be sleeping with outdoor exposure, it is recommended that you sleep under a permethrin-impregnated bed net.
13. Make copies of your passport, airplane tickets, visa, immunization records (you can print yours out from the [Student Health Web Portal](#)), and any other important documents. Leave one copy with someone whom you can easily reach and who could fax information to your destination's embassy in an emergency. Carry one copy with you but separate from your passport.

During Your Trip

1. Reduce the risk of a life-threatening blood clot in your legs by getting up, walking, and stretching during your plane trip.
2. Eat and drink wisely. Depending on your destination, you may need to:
 - Avoid uncooked food, raw milk, and soft cheeses.
 - Be cautious when eating fruit. Fruit that you peel yourself is safer than other fruits.
 - Use bottled water, including when brushing your teeth. Avoid ice cubes.
 - Avoid dog meat or “bush meat”.
 - Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before and after each meal.

During Your Trip (continued)

3. Use a credit card for purchases when feasible. ATM/debit card cloning risks have increased worldwide.
4. Do not pet domestic or wild animals, even if they appear friendly. Many countries do not routinely immunize domestic animals against rabies. Seek care immediately for any risky animal exposure.
5. Be safe. Be alert to your surroundings. Injuries are most often associated with adventure activities, driving, or alcohol/drug use.
 - Do not engage in adventure activities alone.
 - Avoid traveling alone after dark.
6. Wear sunscreen, and use insect repellents as needed.
7. Be familiar with local customs, and dress accordingly.
8. Be aware that many countries have harsh law enforcement practices. Adhere to the destination country's laws, and behave respectfully toward police and military personnel. Avoid political demonstrations.

After Your Trip

1. Seek health care immediately if you develop a fever, rash, diarrhea, or respiratory symptoms.
2. Be aware that you may not donate blood products for 3 months after returning from a malaria-risk area.
3. If you traveled to a Zika-risk area, decrease the risk of transmitting the Zika virus to others by:
 - Using mosquito repellent for 3 weeks after returning to the U.S.
 - Using condoms consistently for at least 3 months (males) or 2 months (females) after returning.
4. If you had a prolonged stay in a TB-endemic country or worked there in a healthcare setting, you should complete a TB skin or blood test 8-10 weeks after returning to the U.S. A pre-travel TB test should also have been completed. This recommendation does not apply to students who have already tested positive for TB in the past.

For more info, visit Student Health's [Travel Resources](#) webpage.