

Travel Health Tips- PWNC Guatemala Partnership Travel

Vaccinations

As with all travel, travelers should make sure that they have all routine vaccinations. Please talk with your doctor about

- MMR (Measles/ mumps/rubella), DPT (diphtheria/pertussis/ tetanus), Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Typhoid (recommended)

Just in case... In case of emergencies, all groups should have a well-stocked first aid kit of over the counter medicines and first aid for minor issues. Discuss this with your group. It can be helpful to have one person who is “in charge” of the first aid kit and helping people when they are sick. Preferably, this would be someone with medical experience.

Malaria and Zika- Talk to your health care provider or the health care department about malaria medicine. Suchi and Sur Occidente are in areas where malaria and Zika can be an issue as they are both transmitted by mosquitoes. Zika can be a problem if you are pregnant or are trying to get pregnant in the near future. See the Center for Disease Control for current recommendations. For more information about Zika, see <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/>.

Other tips and recommendations

Before travel

- Start taking a probiotic 3-4 weeks before traveling. Probiotics add “good bacteria” to your gut, which can improve your immune function
- Get lots of sleep, particularly the week before the trip. While preparing for a trip can be a busy time, proper sleep will help your body and mind be rested before the trip, and help your immune system

During travel

- Drink LOTS of filtered water- bring a water bottle that holds 1 liter (large Nalgene); if water bottle is smaller, bring two- we will be at a higher altitude in the Antigua area (base of about 5,000 ft), so drinking lots of water will help prevent sickness. Also, water bottles like LifeStraw have a built in water filter and can help ensure that water is clean. These can be purchased online or at outdoor stores
- Brush your teeth with bottled water only, keep mouth closed in the shower
- Wash and dry all fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating. Rinse the fruits/ vegetables with distilled water. Cut any fruits or vegetables on a clean, dry cutting board.
- Refrain from eating any food from street vendors.
- Eat food and drink that is hot and has been cooked thoroughly. Refrain from eating salads.
- Bring electrolyte replacement fluid (example- Gatorade packets) to put in water to help stay hydrated
- Use hand sanitizer before all meals or before eating anything- even a small snack- wait one minute after sanitizing to eat
- Refrain from touching your mouth
- Wear sunscreen on any part of exposed skin (head, face, neck, arms, upper chest)- sun is more intense closer to the Equator
- Bring pesto bismol and take one tablet per day- can help reduce food borne illness (see the following CDC article for more info... but don't let this article scare you!) <https://www.cdc.gov/features/managing-travelers-diarrhea/index.html>
- Continue to take probiotics throughout the trip
- Bring any prescription meds that you take on a normal basis (or, if you frequently need an over the counter medicine, bring it (example- if you get migraines, bring your migraine medicine)
- Bring a hat and a handkerchief to help protect yourself from the sun
- Just in case, please obtain a prescription for antidiarrheal (such as Cipro), and an anti-nausea (such as Zofran). Please call your health care provider for recommendations
- Bring a few energy bars/ snacks if you are prone to get hungry between meals