

Health/Medical Information for Travelers to Mexico

IMMUNIZATIONS

All travelers should be up to date on routine immunizations:

MMR(measles,mumps&rubella),DPT(diphtheria,pertussis,typhoid), Polio,&Tetanus

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) *recommends* that all travelers to Mexico receive (but does not require) Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B immunization. Hepatitis A is a viral illness which affects the liver. It is transmitted person-to-person and by contact with contaminated food or water. The initial immunization provides fairly immediate immunity while the second vaccination (occurring 6 months after the initial immunization) confers life-long protection. Hepatitis A is now a required childhood immunization, but was not introduced until 1995 – 96 so some individuals may not have received it during routine medical care and immunization.

Hepatitis B is a more serious blood borne illness, contracted through unprotected sex, needle exchange, or unsterile medical or dental equipment, none of which we are planning to encounter on this trip! Hepatitis B is also now a required childhood immunization but it is necessary to **ask your physician and determine whether your child has had these immunizations; if not, consider getting them now.** Even a single dose can start to provide protection.

MALARIA

According to the Center for Disease Control

website <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/mexico.aspx> with information specific to travel to Mexico, malaria is indicated as present in the state of Chiapas.

Our primary destination of Tuxtla Gutierrez, the state capital, is a highly urbanized city listed as risk free on the International Association of Medical Assistance to Travelers web site: http://www.iamat.org/country_profile.cfm?id=110&risks=1

**** Parents are advised to be informed and urged to consult their medical provider and make individual decisions regarding prophylactic treatment with anti-malarial drugs.**

WATER SAFETY: How to avoid Traveler's Diarrhea

- Drink bottled water only - or bottled or canned beverages
- Wipe off the top of the can before opening it and be sure water bottles have an unbroken seal before drinking from them.
- Look for bubbles in a carbonated drink, if no bubbles, do not drink
- NO ICE – it's made from tap water!
- Use designated water for tooth brushing - *and* for rinsing your toothbrush.
- Don't swallow water when in the shower
- Do not purchase ANY food or drinks from street vendors.
- Purchase only commercially packaged snacks from shops
- Eat only cooked food or fruit that *you can peel yourself*
- No salads, seafood, or pre-peeled fruit
- Handwashing – Handwashing - Handwashing (see below)
- Use disinfectant wipes and lotion if soap & water not available.
- Be mindful of not touching one's own (or anyone else's ☺) nose , mouth, or eyes.

- NO sharing drinks, chapstick, cups or utensils. Help remind each other, too!
- Always know source of food offered. Politely ask if uncertain.
- Avoid highly spiced foods

NOT SURE? Ask ANY Chaperone!

HANDWASHING

Good handwashing - using lots of friction, soap and water - is THE MOST EFFECTIVE PREVENTION FOR CONTRACTING DIARRHEAL DISEASE - as has been proven in multiple medical studies. Good handwashing is essential before meals, after blowing one's nose or using the bathroom, and after playing with children whose hands may not have been washed recently!

Using sink water (with soap) is OK but sing “Alphabet song” and wash thoroughly!

TRAVELER’S DIARRHEA

Despite precautions, Traveler’s Diarrhea may occur. Please refer to the CDC website for information <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/travelersdiarrhea>. All travelers are asked to have their own supply of recommended antibiotics available should diarrhea develop. Incidences of moderate to severe diarrhea in these circumstances are considered to be bacterial in nature. **Please consult your physician.** Antibiotics are available free from Publix pharmacy with a written prescription. No student will take any medication without the direction and consent of their chaperone.

SICK – Not feeling well?

- Tell your chaperone **immediately** if you feel queasy, feverish, nauseated, have a stomach ache, or *anything else* that doesn’t feel right to you.
- If you are with your host family TELL THEM and have them call your chaperone DAY or NIGHT
- If you have diarrhea – even one time – tell your chaperone immediately - if you are with your host family TELL THEM and have them call your chaperone DAY or NIGHT
- Roommates watch out for one another – REPORT any illness you have concerns about affecting your roommate or yourself.

INSECT BITE PREVENTION

- Please send insect repellent containing ‘DEET’ – read the labels as not all bug repellent contains DEET.
- Everyone should have 1 set of light-weight, light-colored long sleeved cotton shirts and pants along.
- Applying insect repellent morning and evening and after showering along with wearing long sleeved clothing will help to prevent mosquito and other insect bites.

I have read and understood this document and have reviewed precautions with my student.

Parent _____ DATE _____