

Study Away & Wellness: A Planning Tool

The Four Primary Areas of Wellness to Consider when Traveling

Travel, with new schedules, new diets, new cultural norms, and changing plans, naturally stresses your body, mind and sense of self. By preparing for travel challenges in these four areas of your wellness, you can minimize the negative impacts of travel on your overall well-being.



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Travel stresses the body. There are new climates, foods, sleep patterns, jetlag, and more. What can you do to help your body adjust and avoid digestive, respiratory, and other common travel issues?

- **Prepare before Departure:** Speak with your doctor about the trip, your medical needs and any vaccines required or recommended for your destination. Sooner is better as some vaccines could take time to obtain.
- **Provide info:** Be sure you accurately and honestly complete all predeparture medical info forms, to provide full information to program leaders. If you need emergency care, the info they get from you can be essential to your care.
- **Minimize jetlag:** hydrate with lots of water, try to set your clock on the destination time as soon as you get on the plane, and either stay active or take only short power naps (20-30 min) during waking hours once you arrive.
- **Hydrate:** Drinking lots of water helps your body avoid lots of other issues.
- **Prioritize Sleep:** Try to get 8 hours a night, again to give your immune system some help.

MENTAL HEALTH



Travel can heighten stress, anxiety, feelings of depression or loneliness, and may raise strong emotions such as confusion and frustration. Try these strategies to build resilience to these stresses.

- **Prepare before Departure:** Speak with any mental health professionals in your life to design plans for how to manage the potential heightened stressors you face.
- **Provide info:** Be sure you accurately and honestly complete all predeparture medical info forms, to provide full information to program leaders. If you need support while away, the info they get from you can be essential to your care.
- **Access Care Resources:** Register online with the college's telehealth provider, download their app, and also add the International SOS app prior to departure.
- **Coping Plans:** Think about the different ways you find relief or stress-coping strategies at home. Decide which are viable as you travel and "pack them" with a plan to use them.
- **Connect:** Do you have people in your life who help you manage mental health concerns? Set up a way to stay in touch while away, one that works for you and them.



DIET & MEDICATIONS

What you eat, when you eat, and the availability of medications you rely on may be very different while away. A bit of pre-departure planning can minimize concerns in these areas of your well-being.

- **Do Not Make Changes:** Travel is rough on your body and mind, so it is a bad time to reduce, alter, or go off any medications. Stick to what has worked for you and avoid medication changes within one month of departure or while traveling.
- **Get Informed:** Check on legality and availability of your medications in the destination country before you go. A change may be needed if a medication is not allowed in the host country. International SOS can help with this.
- **Pack Carefully:** Always pack meds in your carry-on to avoid loss and always in their original bottles. Bring enough for the entire trip. Bring copies of the prescription that gives the chemical name, not the brand name (which changes around the world).
- **Be Clear About Diet Restrictions:** Inform program staff before departure of any dietary restrictions or allergies. Ask for help conveying this to homestay families too.

IDENTITY & IMMERSION



All the different elements of who you are (gender, race, nationality, language, sexual orientation, etc.) can be viewed differently and change in value as you travel. Consider how your identity may impact your perception of others and their perception of you.

- **Gender & Sexual Orientation:** Cultural norms are variable on issues of gender, sex, and sexual activity, including very basic items like personal space and public affection. Research your host destination ahead of time.
- **Gender on Legal Documents:** It may not always be comfortable or accurate to your sense of self, but you should anticipate situations in which you may be viewed through the lens of the gender cited on your passport.
- **Race & Nationality:** Changing cultures can often result in changing attitudes to your nationality, your ethnicity, and your race. If you encounter difficulty or feel unsafe, you should speak with program leaders before any issues escalate or cause you heightened anxiety.
- **Understanding is 2 Directions:** Being open, patient, and reflective about attitudes you encounter as well as your own preconceptions can minimize conflict and create a learning environment for you and those you meet.

Resources For Travel Wellness

These online resources can help you get information to plan for your well-being while studying away.

Physical Health Resources

CDC Travel Health Information: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

Dept. of State Country Info Pages: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

International SOS (*requires CC's login*): <https://myportal.internationalsos.com/MemberExperienceLogin/Login>



Mental Health Resources

BeGlobalii.com: <https://beglobalii.com/articles/managing-mental-health-abroad>

UW-Madison: <https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/student-identity/mental-health-abroad/>

UCLA Student Blog: <https://blog.uceap.universityofcalifornia.edu/tips-to-maintain-mental-health-study-abroad/>



Identity & Immersion Resources

BeGlobalii.com Country Guides: <https://beglobalii.com/articles> (Diversity guides for many destinations)

IES Abroad Social Identity Resources: <https://www.iesabroad.org/identity-resources/social-identity>



Your Wellness Checklist

Whether for a block, a semester, or a year, planning for wellness before you depart is a huge step towards reducing any potential negative impact of your study away on your health and well-being.



I completed all predeparture Medical Info Forms accurately, including notes as needed.



I spoke with my doctor(s) about my medical needs, my medications, and my travel plans.



My doctor and I reviewed CDC information and I obtained all inoculations required by my program.



I checked on legality and access of my prescription medications in my travel destination.



I packed enough medication for the entire program in my carry-on luggage.



I will not change, reduce, or go off medications one month prior to, or during the study away program.



I expect to experience different cultural norms, attitudes, and of perceptions of my identity.



I have people I can speak to if I feel uncomfortable, confused, or frustrated with cultural differences.



I am ready to ask for help when I feel I need it, even if I am normally very independent.



I downloaded and registered with both the I-SOS and the CC Telehealth apps on my phone.



I know how to access medical care/coverage through International SOS or my program's plan.



I "packed" several mental health stress-coping strategies I know I can use while away.



I have a plan to communicate with my support network in a way that works for us both.



I have spoken with CC Accessibility and program sponsors about approved accommodations.



I have been clear with program leaders or providers about my dietary restrictions & needs.



I will prioritize hydration and sleep as two impactful immunity boosters.



I will communicate with program leaders if I am concerned about my health (physical or mental).



I will be proactive about personal safety, health and self-care so I can have a great experience.