SUGGESTIONS FOR A SAFE TRIP

“With reason one can travel the world over; Without it it is hard to move an inch.”
~ Chinese Proverb

Student Health Travel Clinic
All VCU students are welcome to schedule a travel appointment at Student Health. For more information about our travel clinic, go to www.students.vcu.edu/health/immunizations/travel_clinic.html.

If you prefer to see an outside provider, Student Health can provide information about travel clinics in the Richmond area.

Complete your travel health care 30 to 60 days before departure. Be prepared to provide specific information about your destination, activities, and accommodations.

Student Health will recommend and administer most travel vaccines and provide prescriptions.

Immunizations
Vaccines should be received a minimum of 15 days before arrival at your destination. Many vaccines should be obtained 30 to 60 days before departure. Some vaccines require 6 months for completion.

Routine childhood vaccines should be up to date before travel vaccines are administered. Students who have not received routine childhood vaccines need special planning. Student Health will also assist with religious exemption forms.

Health & Travel Insurance
We encourage students to obtain international health & emergency evacuation insurance, as well as travel insurance.

The International Student I.D. Card (ISIC) provides basic health, evacuation, and travel insurance at a low cost to students. Call the VCU Global Education office at 827-7882 to apply or go to www.myisic.com.

Additional health and travel insurance information can be found at www.travelinsurancereview.net.

Scuba Diving Insurance
Divers Alert Network (DAN) offers travel, dive accident, and dive equipment insurance. Visit www.dan.org or call 1-800-446-2671.

Driving While Abroad
In general, it is best not to drive while traveling abroad. If you plan to drive, you will need an international driver’s license and international auto insurance. Contact AAA Mid-Atlantic of Virginia at www.aaa.com or 804-281-7100.

Safety
Prior to your departure:
- Register with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at the U.S. State Department. Registration can be completed online at travelregistration.state.gov/ibs/.
- Make copies of your passport, airplane tickets, visa, 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.

While traveling:
- Secure and insure your valuables.
- Use ATMs at banks whenever possible, as ATM cloning risks have increased worldwide.
- Avoid traveling alone after dark.
- Be alert to your surroundings, and always place your personal safety first when planning activities.

Common travel risks include:
- Injury, which is often associated with impaired judgment (usually due to alcohol or drug use), driving, or adventure activities.
- Infections due to contaminated food or water, insect bites, or injuries.
Travel Resources
Destination health and vaccine information is available online at the:
- Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov
- World Health Organization, www.who.int
- TravMed, www.travmed.com

Information about your destination’s demographics, climate, safety, and travel advisories can be found at the:
- Lonely Planet, www.lonelyplanet.com
- U.S. State Department, www.state.gov
- Foreign & Commonwealth Office (British Commonwealth), www.fco.gov.uk

The Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) provides airport security & luggage information at www.tsa.gov.

Travel Products & Clothing
- WHO oral rehydration salts (ORS) are used to replace fluids and electrolytes due to diarrhea and/or vomiting.
  - They are available at REI or www.amazon.com as “Adventure Medical Kits Oral Rehydration Salts.”
  - Pedialyte is also a WHO ORS.
- If bed nets are needed, they should be pre-treated with permethrin. Review the CDC recommendations for preferred bed nets at www.cdc.gov (Malaria Control section).

Travel Vendors
- Hull Street Outlet, 275-9239
  3820 Jefferson Davis Highway
- REI Outfitters, 360-1381
  2020 Old Brick Road, Short Pump
- Blue Mountain Sports, 794-2004
  11500 Midlothian Turnpike
- Bass Pro Outlet, 496-4700
  11550 N. Lakeridge Parkway, Ashland
- TravMed, www.travmed.com
- Vermont’s Barre Army Navy Store, www.vtarmynavy.com

Scuba Vendors
- Atlantis Divers, 320-7000
  1480 Anderson Highway, Powhatan
- Richmond Dive & Travel, 320-8383
  9840 Midlothian Turnpike

Tips for a Safe Trip
1. Review destination information prior to traveling.
2. Attach a copy of your immunizations to your passport.
3. Register with the STEP program.
4. Insure valuables, including cameras and laptop computers. Do not take anything you can’t afford to have lost or stolen.
5. Reduce the risk for a life-threatening blood clot in your legs by getting up, walking, and stretching during your plane trip.
6. Familiarize yourself with the local customs and dress accordingly. Be aware that some behaviors (such as hand or body signals) may be interpreted differently or be offensive in certain countries.
7. Use a credit card for purchases. It will be more difficult to dispute an inflated charge with an ATM card.
8. Ask the U.S. Embassy for advice and assistance, especially if you need medical care. They can provide a list of English-speaking providers.
9. Avoid uncooked food, raw milk, and soft cheeses. Use bottled water, including when brushing your teeth. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before and after each meal.
10. Many countries do not routinely immunize domestic animals against rabies. Do not pet domestic animals or eat dog meat. Seek care immediately for any risky animal exposure.
11. Do not engage in adventure activities alone. Have a plan of action for potential injuries.
12. Carry all of your medicines (including over-the-counter drugs) in their original packages.
13. Wear sunscreen, and use insect repellents as needed.
14. Wear comfortable shoes. Avoid open-toed sandals and flip-flops to decrease the risk of injury.
15. 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.