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Health

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS PRE-DEPARTURE

Travel vaccines

PLAN AHEAD. START THE PROCESS EARLY.

You may need to get vaccinated against serious diseases found in other parts of the world. Some countries require an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) to enter. Get travel health specialist advice at least eight weeks before your travel; some vaccines come in a series and take time to be effective.

If you are covered by campus health insurance, get the vaccine while eligible as most travel vaccines may be covered. Contact your [campus health insurance office](#).

The UCEAP travel insurance does not cover vaccines.

Confidentiality of your medical information

All information that UCEAP collects is kept strictly confidential and only shared with program officials who need to know and can help during pre-departure planning and/or an emergency.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Inform Yourself: Planning and awareness will decrease health risks

- ▶ Forward planning, appropriate preventive measures, and careful precautions can substantially reduce the risks of adverse health consequences. Four to six weeks before departure, have a pre-travel health consultation to review your medical history and help you determine any health risks based on your destination and itinerary.

Medical care abroad can be very different than it is in the US. Existing health problems could be made worse when adjusting to unfamiliar food, a different climate, air quality, and the emotional strains of being away from home. It can be easy to forget about taking care of yourself.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

- Visit the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Travelers' Health destination pages for health recommendations and information](#). Choose the country or countries you will be visiting.
- Check the CDC "[Travel Health Notices](#)" for your destination. Find out about travel health conditions and advisories at your destination and learn how to prevent injuries and the spread of infectious diseases.
- See a travel health specialist for a pre-travel consultation, including vaccinations, eight weeks before your travel. The UCEAP travel insurance does not cover vaccinations. If you are enrolled in campus student insurance, verify with your campus Student Health Insurance Office whether vaccinations are covered.
- Have a plan and a budget if you are sick or injured, or if you need to see a doctor for continued treatment.

The UCEAP travel insurance does not work like a campus insurance plan. You pay up front for eligible medical services and submit a claim for refund consideration. There is no copay or deductible. Review the [Insurance](#) chapter in this guide for more information.



MAIN HEALTH RISKS WHILE TRAVELING

- Road accidents
- Infections
- Insect-borne illnesses
- Food- and water-borne illnesses
- Climate, sun exposure, altitude sickness, air quality
- Animal bites or scratches
- Allergies (e.g., food, medication, environment)
- Behavioral changes to facilitate adaptation (flexibility, respect of local culture and mores, etc.)
- Accidents are the most frequent cause of problems: slip and falls, animal bites or stings, water-related accidents and violent mishaps all occur, often when under the influence of alcohol.
- Immunizations and chemoprophylaxis to prevent/reduce the risk of some endemic diseases present at your destination;
- Local medical facilities that may differ from the US.

Before departure, identify medical services and resources abroad

Read about local medical facilities and their standard of care.

Identify host country health care resources before your trip in case of a medical emergency. Consult with UCEAP Systemwide. This is especially important if you have a pre-existing medical condition. Information about local medical care may be provided after arrival during your UCEAP on-site orientation. You can also access the local [US Embassy](#) list of medical facilities online.

- ▶ Print your [UCEAP insurance card](#) and carry it with you at all times as instructed in your Pre-Departure Checklist.

PREVENTION WHILE TRAVELING

Your health while traveling

- Risks will vary depending on geography, the length of your trip, diversity of planned activities, and your personal behavior.
- To prevent many common travel illnesses, be careful about food and water, protect against insect and mosquito bites, and wash hands frequently. Download the [CDC app, Can I Eat This?](#)
- Riskier activities (e.g., paragliding, bungee jumping, moped-riding, drinking excessively) increase the likelihood of injuries.
- Leave animals alone. Animal bites or scratches can transmit rabies. Seek immediate help if you are bitten or licked after washing the wound immediately to decrease the change of infection. Access to preventive treatment may be difficult, depending on the country.



Mass gatherings and your health and security

Mass gatherings ranging from major sports events to fairs, festivals, concerts, or political rallies may pose special health and safety risks.

TIPS:

- Be aware of the health risks associated with the event you are attending, and determine what you can do to stay healthy and safe.
- Avoid gatherings where drug and alcohol use could contribute to dangerous behavior, where political or religious fervor may contribute to violence, or where inadequate facilities may contribute to an unhealthy environment.
- Avoid densely congested areas with limited exits. Wherever you are, ensure you know how to get out.

Managing pre-existing medical conditions

Living and studying in a foreign environment may cause unexpected physical and emotional stress, which can exacerbate some chronic conditions. Do not take health risks. It is important to follow health precautions before, during, and after the journey. Learn about your destination and have a plan.

If your immune system is weakened from a disease such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, or from chemotherapy or medicines, talk to your doctor before departure about your travel plans in detail. There may be added risks related to travel.

UCEAP countries where hygiene and sanitation, medical care, and water quality are of a high standard pose relatively less risks for your health. In contrast, UCEAP countries where hygiene, sanitation, and medical services are below standards, and clean water is unavailable, may pose serious health risks.

Know what to do during a health emergency

Carry contact information (phone numbers and addresses) of local emergency services, and all emergency contacts for your program. Share this list with your parents.

UCEAP representatives both in California and abroad are prepared and experienced to respond during any kind of emergency. If you need advice in finding a doctor or counselor, need a prescription refill, or if you are not feeling well, contact the Study Center staff or host institution.

Allergies

Research and plan your trip thoroughly in consultation with your doctor. An allergic reaction can occur within minutes or up to hours after exposure and it could compromise your education abroad experience.

Medical Alert ID

If you have significant allergies or chronic medical conditions, consider wearing a medical alert bracelet or a Medic Alert emblem. For more information, you can contact [American Medical ID](#).



HEALTH RISKS: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Influenza (flu) vaccine

The UCEAP physician consultant strongly encourages a flu vaccine before departure, particularly if you have a chronic medical condition (e.g., asthma, diabetes). Influenza is one of the most common ailments reported by UCEAP students.

Sexually transmitted diseases

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are spread primarily through person-to-person sexual contact. STDs are the main preventable cause of infertility, particularly in women. Many countries have been unsuccessful in adequately controlling STDs.

Abstinence or mutual monogamy with an uninfected partner is the most reliable way to avoid acquiring and transmitting STDs. Access the [CDC Sexually Transmitted Diseases](#) website for more information.

HIV/AIDS

AIDS is a chronic, life-threatening condition caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The infection occurs worldwide.

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

There is no vaccine to prevent HIV infection and no cure for AIDS, but it is possible to protect yourself and others from infection by educating yourself about HIV and avoiding any behavior that allows HIV-infected fluids into your body.

KNOW BEFORE YOU TRAVEL:

Access the [CDC HIV Basics](#) page and inform yourself.

Abuse of alcohol and other drugs

Many students experiment with alcohol and other drugs when they are in a foreign country where they may be of legal drinking age. Tainted alcohol is a global problem. Alcohol concentrations by volume (ABV) are stronger in some countries.

Acute alcohol poisoning can occur when someone drinks too much alcohol in a short time.

If you decide to drink while abroad, drink wisely. Former UCEAP students who had been drinking were more at risk of being the victim, or perpetrator, of attacks, robberies, muggings and sexual assaults.

Control your drinking to minimize accidents, and enhance your decision making. If you choose to consume alcohol, know that you remain responsible for your actions at all times and that alcohol abuse is against UCEAP policy.

FOUR SIGNS OF ALCOHOL POISONING

Watch out for your intoxicated friends. If any of your friends show even one sign of alcohol poisoning, as below, call emergency services.

- Unconscious or unable to be roused
- Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin
- Slow or irregular breathing
- Vomiting repeatedly or uncontrollably

**HOW TO HELP:**

- Trust your instincts!
- Turn the person on their side to prevent choking while vomiting. Do not make them throw up. They can choke on their own vomit or accidentally inhale vomit into their lungs.
- Stay with the person. Do not leave them alone or let them “sleep it off.”
- Call the local emergency number, the UCEAP representative, and/or a hospital immediately. Do not hesitate to call for help.

Warning Signs for Drug Overdose

Watch out for your friends. If anyone shows even one sign of drug overdose, call emergency services.

SIGNS OF DRUG OVERDOSE

- Problems with vital signs (temperature, pulse rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure) can be life threatening. Vital sign values can be increased, decreased, or completely absent.
- Sleepiness, confusion, and coma are common and can be dangerous if the person breathes fluid into the lungs (aspiration).
- Skin can be cool and sweaty, or hot and dry.
- Seizures (convulsions) may occur.
- Chest pain can be caused by heart or lung damage. Shortness of breath may occur. Breathing may get rapid, slow, deep, or shallow.
- Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea are possible. Vomiting blood, or blood in bowel movements, can be life threatening.

HOW TO HELP

- Stay calm and call local emergency services.

Bed bugs: Know the facts

Bed bugs are found from North and South America, to Africa, Asia and Europe, and they are currently spreading quickly in parts of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe. Bed bugs have been found in five-star hotels and resorts and their presence is not determined by the cleanliness of the living conditions where they are found.

Some simple preventive measures can be taken to minimize the possible impact on your travels and, more importantly, on your permanent accommodations when you return from your travels.

TRAVEL LIGHT

When traveling, pack only clothing and objects that can be washed or laundered in hot water, which is one easy way to kill any bed bugs. Traveling light also allows you to pack items and clothing into sealable plastic bags when not in use, further protecting against infestation.

SANITATION/PREVENTION

Bed bugs are not due to poor sanitation and/or poverty. Hotels/hostels can be infested and you can bring bed bugs into your home in your luggage or on your clothes. It is much easier to control a population when the infestation is small.

If you travel frequently, and have just returned, watch for signs of bed bugs by checking under your sheets and inspecting your mattress, especially if you have been bitten. If you suspect bed bugs, act immediately, notify the local UCEAP staff/host institution and wash all your clothes in hot water immediately.

Bed bugs can cause itching and loss of sleep. Itching may lead to excessive scratching that can sometimes increase the chance of a secondary skin infection.



DO NOT OVERREACT

Access the US Environmental Protection Agency, [Bed Bugs page](#) to inform yourself.

MEDICATIONS AND SUPPLIES

Prescription medications – Know the local laws and obey them

Host country national laws mandate what can be brought into a country. Every country has a different classification system for medicines. Although medications in amounts for personal use are rarely inspected or questioned, customs officials can become suspicious of medications in large quantities. Most narcotics, psychotropics and stimulants are subject to international law and can be restricted or banned in other countries.

Pharmaceutical regulations differ. Many countries do not permit pharmacies to fill prescriptions that originate outside their country. To get refills you will need to be evaluated by a local doctor and present a letter from the US doctor explaining your condition, treatment and medication regimen. This will help the local doctor issue a prescription. You will need to pay for the appointment and submit a claim to the UCEAP insurance company. If you do not have this letter, the local doctor may deny re-issuing your prescription.

Plan ahead and follow these recommendations:

- Ask your doctor how to adjust your medication dosage across different time zones.
- Pack your prescription medications in pill form in your carry-on luggage. Do not pack medication in checked luggage as it could get lost or delayed.
- Carry prescriptions in original containers with your name on it. Pack copies of all prescriptions, including the generic names for medications.
- Have a note, on letterhead stationery, from the prescribing physician (signed and dated) indicating your condition, treatment, and medication regimen. Carry this letter with you through Customs and show it to the local doctor.
- Talk to your doctor if traveling with prescription medications.
- Rules on amphetamine-based medications used for attention deficit disorders should always be checked ahead of time:
 - Embassies are generally not good sources of information.
 - Check your UCEAP Program Guide for links to more specific resources.
 - Access the INCB Guidelines if travelling with medications that are narcotics or psychotropics.
- If you have diabetes or use injectable medication, obtain and carry at all times a doctor's letter explaining the need to carry needles and syringes.
- Do not mail medication ahead of your arrival. Do not have medication mailed to you.
- Do not have your parents or anyone else travel with medications that are issued to you. No one can bring additional medications for you into the country. This is considered drug trafficking and could lead to fines and/or incarceration.

Medical marijuana

Never travel internationally with any amount of medical marijuana. Marijuana is illegal in many countries. Students with a US prescription for marijuana can be arrested, prosecuted and deported if in possession of any illegal substance.

Airports and airplanes are federal jurisdictions. You can be detained and arrested when going through security. Federal authorities do not recognize the medical marijuana laws or cards of any state.



UCEAP Travel insurance and prescription medication

Make sure you understand your terms of coverage before you request a refill while in the US or abroad.

You can **fill and pay** for medication prescribed by a licensed physician when coverage is effective (14 days before the official start of the program).

To submit a claim form for a refund:

1. Download and print the **claim form**
2. In the 'COMPLETE THIS SECTION FOR SICKNESS CLAIM' cross out 'Date of sickness' and write in "prescription medication"
3. Scan and attach the completed claim form and the pharmacy receipt to an email addressed to UCEAP insurance claims company, intlassist@acitpa.com. The pharmacy receipt must include the fill date, Rx number, medication name, strength, dosage, quantity, days' supply, amount paid, prescriber name and your name. Keep copies of everything you submit.

US prescriptions cannot be filled abroad

You will need to see a local physician if you need a refill. It will be important to have a copy of your US prescription and a letter from your treating physician, on letterhead, indicating the condition, treatment, and medication regime.

BUYING MEDICATIONS OVER THE COUNTER WHILE ABROAD

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), virtually any drug, including antibiotics and antimalarial medications, can be purchased without prescription in many developing countries. Do not buy these medications. The quality and safety of drugs purchased outside the US cannot be guaranteed and may not meet US standards and they may even be counterfeit or potentially hazardous because of contaminants. In fact, 36 percent of antimalarials abroad are counterfeit.

- ▶ Before returning to the US, be aware that medications purchased abroad may not be FDA-approved or allowed into the US.

Prescription eyewear

The UCEAP insurance does not cover preventive eye exams or prescription eyewear. If you are covered by your campus health insurance while abroad, you may be able to claim this expense. Consult with your campus student health insurance office if eye exams and prescription eyewear is covered through this plan.

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take an extra pair and your written prescription abroad. Take sufficient quantities of contact lens solution, since it may not be readily available or the product name may not be the same as in the US. Also, in some countries you may need to see an optometrist, optician or ophthalmologist to get contact lens solutions because they are considered drugs.

Information for students with diabetes

Diabetes management is important when traveling. Plan ahead to ensure that you have all the things you need.

At the airport, before departure from the US, notify the Transportation Security Administration Security Officer that you have diabetes and are carrying your supplies with you. For a list of supplies that are allowed on the plane after screening, visit the [TSA website](#).



Sample first-aid kit

Assemble a travel health kit tailored to your needs, length of travel, and destinations.

Include in your first-aid kit treatment for minor cuts and abrasions and something for temporary diarrhea, and a variety of bandages, medications, and equipment to stabilize injuries until proper medical attention can be administered. Obtain advice from your physician on assembling a suitable medical kit and visit the [CDC website](#) for a list of recommended items.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

Disclose conditions before departure

Even if you do not have a prior history of mental illness, travel stress, mood changes, anxiety and other mental health concerns can unexpectedly affect you and potentially disrupt you. Study abroad can be a personally rewarding and culturally expanding experience, but it can also be somewhat stressful. Many college-age students experience anxiety, depression, stress and other mental health conditions. In addition, existing mild physical or psychological disorders can be aggravated by the stresses of travel and life in an unfamiliar setting.

Living in a new culture, even for a short time, may cause stressors different from studying at UC. You may encounter a challenging environment for which you may not be as mentally prepared as originally anticipated.

Homesickness is normal, especially if you have never traveled abroad. You may feel frustrated, impatient and irritable at times. You may experience communication problems even if the local language is English. Locals will do things differently and you may consider that their way is as good as yours.

PLAN AHEAD

- Familiarize yourself with the mental healthcare system of your destination and identify a mental health professional whom you can contact immediately in case of an emergency. Some countries do not have access to bilingual counseling or psychiatric facilities. Work with UCEAP officials.
- Set up a support system in advance, even if you think you will not need it as you could experience some level of stress with the transition of living in a new country.
- Before departure, consult with your doctor the potential stresses of traveling and living abroad and create a mental health plan while you are abroad. Identify how you will access social support systems, engage in self-care behaviors, and cope with emergencies while you are abroad. Get advice on how to stay healthy and how to communicate with one another while you are abroad; consider the time difference and methods (Skype, texting, email, phone calls, etc.). Ask your doctor about medication management.
- Know before you go how you will pay for appointments with local doctors and how the UCEAP travel insurance policy claims process works. Generally, it is not possible for local doctors to bill insurance abroad.
- Understand and be aware of the social and cultural acceptance of mental health at your destination. Consider whether it is easy to find a local psychiatrist and/or counselor.

You are responsible for assessing (along with your parent/guardian and physician) any physical or mental health conditions that could be affected by studying abroad; there are certain conditions that may require continued therapy, monitoring, or specific support mechanisms while abroad. Talk to your doctor to discuss if the type of travel and your destination are appropriate for you.

If you disclose in advance of participation, UCEAP can help you to arrange appropriate accommodations abroad, if available.



While Abroad

- Give yourself plenty of time to arrive and go through safety checks. Inform TSA about your condition to make your trip less stressful. Establish a routine. Familiarize yourself with your surroundings. If possible, integrate activities into your daily life that you enjoyed in the US. Know your mental and physical limits. Ask for help when you notice the first sign of distress. Do not try to manage alone. Re-assess your original plans and change them to minimize stress levels. Take your medication as prescribed. Do not reduce or stop the dosage without a doctor's approval. Know who to call locally for help if you feel distressed.

References and resources

The following are UC offices of counseling and psychological services:

UC Berkeley

Counseling and Psychological Services
2222 Bancroft Way
(510) 642-9494

Call (510) 643-7197 to speak to an advice nurse Mon–Fri, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

<https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling>

UC Davis

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
219 North Hall
(530) 752-0871

Advice Nurse: (530) 752-2349

<https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/counseling-services>

UC Irvine

Counseling Center
Room 202 Student Services
(949) 824-6457

<http://www.counseling.uci.edu>

UC Los Angeles

John Wooden Center West
221 Westwood Plaza
24/7: (310) 825-0768

<http://www.counseling.ucla.edu>

UC Merced

H. Rajender Reddy Health Center
Joseph Edward Gallo Recreation & Wellness Center, 2nd Floor
24/7: (209) 228-4266 and press 1 after the prompt to be connected to a ProtoCall clinician.

<http://counseling.ucmerced.edu>

UC Riverside

Counseling Center
Veitch Student Center
North Wing

Phone: (951) 827-5531

<http://counseling.ucr.edu>

**UC San Diego**

Psychological and Counseling Services (P&CS)

Galbraith Hall, Room 190

24/7: (858) 534-3755

<https://caps.ucsd.edu>

UC Santa Barbara

Counseling Services

Building 599

24/7: (805) 893-4411

<http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu>

UC Santa Cruz

Counseling and Psychological Services

1156 High Street

24/7: (831) 459-2628; After office hours, select option 3 (talk to a counselor)

<https://caps.ucsc.edu>

MORE USEFUL RESOURCES ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH.

- **Befrienders**, a network of 400 volunteer crisis centers in 39 countries, across 6 continents. These centers provide help to those in need of emotional support.
- **The JED Foundation**
- **ULifeline**, a free, anonymous website that links you to your college counseling center and a library of mental health information.