

Health & Safety

Health & Safety Overview

- Register Your Travel.** In the event of an emergency, Yale will know your whereabouts and contact information, and will be able to respond quickly. (world.yale.edu/travelform)
- Complete Yale University's Waiver Form.** Complete the Release Form and return it to your administering office. Anyone seeking credit or funding for activities abroad MUST complete this form. (A copy of the form is available for download from www.yale.edu/yalecollege/international/advising/health)
- Health Insurance.** Make sure you have adequate health insurance. Yale Health Plan provides minimal coverage while abroad so you should look into other options to cover such things as routine visits, prescriptions, etc. YHP can let you know exactly what they do and do not cover while a student is abroad. Whether you use the YHP or another provider, talk to your family and review your current health plan and make sure you will be covered while abroad.

Questions to ask of your health insurance provider

1. Will the plan cover hospitalization for accidents and illness for the entire period I'm abroad?
2. Will the plan cover doctor visits and medications?
3. Will the plan cover care for pre-existing conditions?
4. Is there a deductible? How much?
5. Is there a dollar limit to the amount of coverage provided?
6. What are the procedures for filing a claim for medical expenses abroad? Do I pay up front and then get reimbursed?
7. What if I don't have enough money to pay cash up front?
8. When does the plan begin and end?
9. What do I use as proof of international medical coverage?
10. Will this policy cover me in the US for the insured semester/year if I decide, for medical or other reasons, to return to the US before the end of the program?

- MEDEX Travel Assistance.** MEDEX is a comprehensive travel assistance program providing worldwide 24/7 emergency medical and security assistance whenever you are more than 100 miles away from home. Yale provides this benefit at no cost to all students, faculty and staff members. MEDEX also provides valuable pre-travel information. Travelers should understand that this is not a medical or accident insurance plan, and should be sure that they are covered under the terms of their own insurance. Register at yale.medexassist.com.

Health Checklist

- Your Health.** Assess your health and identify your health needs. Students (along with their parent/guardian, and physician) are responsible for assessing any physical or mental health conditions that may be adversely affected by travel abroad. If physical or mental health conditions require continued therapy, monitoring, or specific support mechanisms while abroad, students should consider self-disclosing the issue(s) to colleagues, program organizers, and other contacts abroad well in advance of departure so appropriate accommodations can be arranged.
- Health documentation.** Gather health documentation such as immunization records, prescriptions, eye glass/contact prescriptions (it is advisable to bring a spare pair).
- Immunizations.** Check to see whether or not immunizations are needed for your host country, or countries in which you plan to travel -- the Travel Clinic at the Yale Health Plan offers pre-departure consultations and immunizations. Information on health care and medical facilities in your host country can be found at the Centers for Disease Control website (www.cdc.gov).

- Traveling to Mexico, Asia, Africa, South America or Eastern Europe?** If so, you may require vaccinations and/or medications to help keep you healthy during your time abroad. If you have not already done so, please contact the Travel Clinic as soon as possible to find whether or not you should schedule a consultation to talk about the vaccinations, etc. that you will need before going abroad. To schedule a Travel Clinic consultation, please call 2-0093 as soon as possible. If you prefer to use your home physician, please contact her/him as soon as possible. Whether you use the Yale Travel Clinic, or your home physician, please be aware that some inoculations need to be spaced out in order to be effective so early planning is essential. Information on health conditions around the world can be found at wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationList.aspx.
- Prescription medication.** Beware of customs limitations and regulations on medicines brought into your host country. Talk to your physician, Yale's Travel Clinic, your study abroad program/university, and the embassy of your host country for more information. Some medications that are routinely prescribed in the U.S. may be much more heavily regulated in other countries. When bringing prescription drugs with you while traveling, bring also a note from your physician describing your condition and the necessity of the medication. Your physician should also include the generic name of the drug as specific brand names available here may not be available elsewhere in the world. Medications should be clearly labeled and in the original container.
- AIDS and STDs are a problem world wide. If you choose to be sexually active while abroad, please do so safely. Please note that latex condoms (the only kind you should be using!) may not always be available where you are traveling so men and women should pack their own supply. For more information, check out the Student Health Education web site on safe sex at www.yale.edu/yhp/med_services/student_health.html.
- Food and Water Born Illness:** Though some stomach problems may be inevitable as you get used to your new environment, avoid food and water born illness by being careful about what you eat and drink (or brush your teeth with!). Many kinds of nasty bugs can be picked up from food and beverages that have been contaminated through improper handling or inadequate purification. Please read carefully the travel advice from the CDC available at wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/yellowBookCh2-FoodWaterRisks.aspx.

Safety Checklist

- Register Your Travel with Yale College.** In the event of an emergency, Yale will know your whereabouts and contact information, and will be able to respond quickly. Register your travel at world.yale.edu/travelform.
- Be aware of Yale's emergency management system.** This information can be found at the "Yale and the World" website: world.yale.edu/abroad/travel_emergency.html. Carry contact information for your program directors with you at all times – even when traveling.
- Register with the local U.S. Embassy!** Registering with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy will allow them to contact you in case of an emergency. Registering is easy – you can do it online by going to registration section of the Department of State travel web site travel.state.gov/travel/abroad_registration.html. Click on "Travel Registration" and follow the instructions.
- Stay informed** about local events in your host country and around the world. You can do this by reading the country information available on the Department of State travel website, by reading local papers and listening to local radio stations (you can do this via the web before you even leave).
- Make yourself aware of local laws.** While living and traveling abroad, you are subject to the laws of your host country.
- Be aware of issues** (legal, safety and health) around alcohol and drug use. Remember – you are subject to the laws of your host country, and any country to which you travel. The penalties for drug possession and use can be severe, as can be the case with penalties for driving while under the influence (and legal blood alcohol levels can be much lower than is allowed in the U.S.). Drug and alcohol use and abuse are also implicated in many assaults and accidents that happen abroad. Stay safe!
- Observe the behavior of the host country nationals.** Local habits can give you many clues to what is safe in a city and country. Don't let your guard down as you become more familiar with your host city/country. Keep your wits about you at all times. Common sense is key!
- Keep a low profile while living and traveling abroad – try not to be conspicuous in your dress (college t-shirts, baseball caps and sneakers are usually a sure sign you are from the U.S!), speech, or behavior. Try not to hang out with large groups of Americans, or at restaurants and clubs that tend to be hang-outs for visiting Americans. Exploring smaller neighborhood cafés and shops will give you a far better sense of how the locals live than you would get hanging out in tourists traps.

- Traffic accidents** are among the biggest safety risks to people traveling abroad. While the risk appears to be greatest in developing countries, students heading to all countries should be aware of road safety – as pedestrians, as drivers, and as passengers. Road safety information can be found on the web site of the Association for Safe International Road Travel (www.asirt.org) and the Department of State (www.travel.state.gov/travel/abroad_roadsafety.html#safety)
- Avoid crowds, protests, or other potentially volatile situations.** It is also a good idea to avoid places (restaurants, clubs, etc.) where Americans are known to congregate – this includes the area around the U.S. Embassy in your host country.
- Plan to make regular contact with your family back home.** Mobile phones and email will make this easy to do, and will put your families mind at ease while you are far from home.
- When traveling,** always make certain the colleagues, friends and family (at home and abroad) know where you are going and when you are expected to return. You should provide these persons with an itinerary as well as emergency contact information.