Traveling abroad will affect your health in one way or another, as many factors that influence your daily health have to do with lifestyle and environment. Also keep in mind that not being healthy in all aspects will put a negative twist on your time abroad. Be sure to plan ahead properly by considering the following information outlined below.

If you would like to speak to a counselor or nurse as you prepare for your departure, please contact Health Services and Counseling at extension 4371 or by email at wallaceed@wofford.edu to schedule an appointment. We are located in the Hugh R. Black Building.

Assess Your Health Status & Identify Your Needs

Studying abroad is not a magic cure for solving concerns and problems that you may be having at home. Emotional, psychological, and physical problems will indeed follow you wherever you go, so it is important to honestly evaluate your health issues and needs before you go abroad. Contrary to popular belief, travel does not minimize these problems; rather, it often can exacerbate them to the point of crisis if you are not aware. Be proactive, find out where and who can give you assistance when you arrive in the event of a problem.

Be clear and honest about your health needs when applying for a study abroad program and when making your housing arrangements. This includes issues such as medical needs, allergies, mental health concerns, dietary requirements (including vegetarianism), and disabilities.

Services for people with disabilities vary widely around the world; if you have questions or concerns about these issues, please discuss them with the coordinators of your program prior to departure.

Medical Form and Follow-up

Before you go abroad, you will be asked to fill out a complete medical form. It is vital that you complete this form thoroughly and accurately. It is also a good idea to visit your dentist, gynecologist, and any other health care practitioners that you regularly see. Make sure your health records are up-to-date and that you discuss any medical issues you have that may affect your experience abroad. You should take copies of your medical records with you abroad, especially if you have specific medical conditions or if you expect to need medical care abroad.
Prescription Medications

Be sure you have an adequate supply of any prescription medications (in their original containers) with you, if they are not available in your host country. You will need a physician's prescription (in generic form) for medication and medical supplies to pass through customs in your host country. There is not a regulatory body for names of prescriptions drugs globally. There have been cases where an individual had the wrong prescription filled abroad. Be aware that drugs with the same name may have different ingredients in other countries.

It is very important that you continue to take your prescribed medications while abroad.

Immunizations

There are certain countries that require specific immunizations in order to enter the country, and there are also immunizations recommended for travel to specific areas of the world. Be sure to check this out well in advance of your departure, as some immunizations require a series of inoculations starting many months before your scheduled travel.

The immunizations you were required to receive prior to admission to Wofford were Hepatitis b series, 2 MMR vaccines, tetanus within 10 years of enrollment, TB within one year of enrollment, and documentation of polio boosters. Many of you may have received the recommended meningitis vaccine through health services or your physician.

Check with health care providers or your own records to ensure that your immunizations are up-to-date. Under the International Health Regulations adopted by the World Health Organization, a country may require International Certificates of Vaccination against yellow fever, and a cholera immunization may be required if you are traveling from an infected area. Prophylactic medication for malaria and certain other preventive measures are advisable for travel to some countries. No immunizations are required to return to the United States.

An increasing number of countries have established regulations regarding HIV testing, particularly for long-term visitors. Check with the embassy or consulate of the country you plan to visit to verify if this is a requirement for entry.

Detailed health information can be obtained from your local Public Health Department, your physician, or by contacting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (phone 888-232-3228 or 877-FYI-TRIP or 800-311-3435 or URL: www.cdc.gov/travel). In Spartanburg, there is also an agency called Passport Health. Their website is www.passporthealthsc.com (phone 864-642-6033).
Other health questions to ask

- Are there illnesses that are endemic to the region?
- What medications should you take to prevent these illnesses?
- What is the quality of water in your host country, and what precautions, if any, do you need to take with your drinking water and food preparation?
- What are the customs, beliefs, and laws in your host country regarding sexual behavior and the use of alcohol and drugs?
- What are the laws in your host country regarding bringing in medications, medical supplies, and contraceptives?

H1N1

Situation Update
April 16, 2010

Flu Activity: Flu activity in the United States declined slightly from last week and is low nationally; however, a couple of states in the Southeast continue to report regional activity, according to the April 4-10, 2010 FluView. Most flu continues to be 2009 H1N1. Flu activity, caused by either 2009 H1N1 or seasonal flu viruses, may rise and fall, but is expected to continue for weeks in the United States. Internationally, 2009 H1N1 flu is still circulating, including in the Southern Hemisphere, which is about to enter its flu season. For more information, please see the international situation update.

2009 H1N1 Flu: International Situation Update

April 16, 2010, 3:30 PM ET
This report provides an update to the international flu situation using data collected through April 11, 2010, and reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) on April 16. WHO continues to report laboratory-confirmed 2009 H1N1 flu cases and deaths on its Web page. These laboratory-confirmed cases represent a substantial underestimation of total cases in the world, as most countries focus surveillance and laboratory testing only on people with severe illness.

Currently, 2009 H1N1 flu activity is highest in parts of Southeast Asia, West and Eastern Africa, and the tropical regions of the Americas. Overall, influenza activity remains low in the Northern Hemisphere, and at this time, little influenza activity has been reported in the Southern Hemisphere. Seasonal influenza B viruses continue to circulate as the predominant influenza subtype in East Asia and have been detected at low levels across parts of Europe. Sporadic detections of seasonal influenza A (H3N2) viruses have been reported across Asia, Eastern Europe, and Eastern Africa. In recent weeks, the highest H3N2 influenza activity has been reported in Indonesia and Tanzania.

**H1N1 Vaccinations available in Health Services during regular work hours.**


Their main travel page is http://www.cdc.gov/travel/

The World Health Organization is another good resource. See:


Their main travel page is http://www.who.int/ith/en/

The U.S. Department of State issues travel warnings and consular information sheets on a country-by-country basis. See:

http://www.state.gov/travel/
When you arrive in your host country

Because of cultural differences, travel, and other adjustment concerns, you will need to continue to pay attention to your health (both physical and mental) when you arrive and throughout your program.

- Be sure you know how to get medical help should you need it, including routine healthcare, as well as emergencies.
- Make sure you make your medical needs known to anyone in your host country that can be of assistance.
- Most importantly, give yourself time to adjust to the new culture, and be attentive to your personal well being making sure you eat healthy foods, get regular sleep and exercise.

Have a wonderful experience and know that we look forward to having you back at Wofford safe and sound!

Beth Wallace
Associate Dean of Students
Director of Health Services and Counseling

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Sources:
Middlebury College. Study Abroad Manual

Center for Disease Control