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## Safety Rules for International Travel

Please be advised that all program participants and designated adult guardians must review and sign these rules prior to any scheduled travel event.

### General Precautions

- \* No Other Paths planned activity will include entering rivers, lakes, or other waterways. Avoid freshwater lakes, tributaries, rivers, and ponds in countries in the developing world-- not only is there a high risk of contracting a waterborne infection (such as schistosomiasis and leptospirosis), but animals such as crocodiles and hippopotamus can attack you if you approach their territorial waters.
- \* Occasionally, we will have opportunities to swim and wade in public beaches and swimming pools in developed areas. Always swim with at least one other person, and obey all posted signs and warnings from local people. If you are unsure if an area is safe for swimming, do not go in the water.
- \* If you will be traveling to high altitudes, check with your family physician prior to your trip so he/she can evaluate your medical history.
- \* If you are traveling to a malaria area and malaria medication is prescribed by your family physician or travel medicine office, take it exactly as your physician or travel advisor instructs.
- \* Take personal precautions against insects during travel. Use DEET, bed nets, treated clothing, room spray, etc. Many insect-transmitted diseases are not preventable by vaccines or drugs.
- \* Be prepared to purify your own supply of drinking water if bottled or boiled drinks are not readily available.
- \* Use bottled or boiled water when brushing your teeth.
- \* Avoid undercooked food and untreated water.
- \* Do not walk barefoot outdoors.
- \* Some diseases may not manifest themselves immediately. If you become ill after you return home, see a doctor as soon as possible.
- \* Do not buy medications "over the counter" unless you are familiar with the product.
- \* Assemble a personal medical kit appropriate to your destination, the length of trip, and your general health condition.

### Personal Medical Kit

- \* Prescription drugs, as required for any pre-existing medical condition(s) as well as those required during the trip (drugs prescribed for traveler's diarrhea, malaria, etc.)
- \* First aid kit with assorted bandages, moleskin for blisters, tape, antibiotic ointment, tweezers, scissors, etc.
- \* Tissues, tampons, sanitary pads
- \* Insect repellent with DEET
- \* Pain/anti-inflammatory medicine (aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen)
- \* Allergy medicine such as antihistamine Benadryl (can also help you sleep and ease nausea)
- \* Clotrimazole (Lotrimin) anti-fungal cream for athlete's foot, jock itch, ringworm; Gyne-Lotrimin for vaginal yeast infections
- \* Loperimide (Imodium AD) and/or Pepto-Bismol tablets for diarrhea; two Pepto-Bismol caplets can be taken per day to assist in preventing some forms of diarrhea
- \* Extra eyeglasses, contact lenses, contact lens solution, hearing aids, and batteries
- \* Sunscreen with at least SPF 15; lip balm with sunscreen
- \* Alcohol gel for hand washing
- \* Water purification tablets and/or microfilter

## Jet Lag

Jet lag is caused by rapid travel across multiple time zones. It tends to be more pronounced when traveling in an easterly direction. It results in the disruption of the body's internal clock and produces such symptoms as fatigue, irritability, disturbed sleep, forgetfulness, and loss of appetite. The average traveler needs about one day to adjust to every two hours of time change.

For example, when traveling to Kenya from the continental United States, you will experience seven to ten hours of time change, depending on from which U.S. time zone you depart; therefore, you'll need three and a half to five days for your body to adjust.

### *Strategies for Reducing Jet Lag*

- \* Begin adjusting to your new time zone before departure. For two or three days before traveling east, eat your meals, go to bed, and get up an hour or two earlier than you usually do.
- \* Upon boarding the airplane, reset your watch to the new destination time and try to adjust eating and sleeping accordingly.
- \* If you are scheduled to arrive in the evening, try to stay awake during the flight.
- \* Force your body to adjust to the new local time as soon as possible through activity, exercise, and meal-time adjustments.
- \* Avoid drinking caffeine during the plane ride to your destination.
- \* Drink plenty of water before and during your flight. Airplane cabins are dry, and dehydration accentuates jet lag.

## Violence and Crime

The risk of assault and terrorist activity varies from country to country. Avoid going out at night in unfamiliar or unsafe areas, and do not go out alone under any circumstances. If approached or confronted by a robber, do not resist; give up your valuables. Seek and heed advice from locals, hotel personnel, and hired guides about areas to avoid. Carry your passport only when local law requires it, or when instructed to do so by an Other Paths leader.

Avoid wearing or displaying expensive jewelry, accessories (such as iPods or cell phones), or flashy clothing. Use a money belt. Do not carry a handbag, especially in crowded marketplaces and tourist destinations.

Do not take pictures of people in the cities or pictures of the Maasi without their permission.

## Food and Waterborne Disease

Contaminated food and water are common sources of infection among travelers to developing countries such as Kenya. Travelers' diarrhea is the most common illness, but more serious infections include typhoid, hepatitis A, and amoebic dysentery.

**Remember this rule: Boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it!**

### *Water Safety*

Avoid untreated tap water, drinks made with water (such as lemonade), and ice cubes in drinks. The following liquids should be considered safe:

- \* Water that has been boiled for more than five minutes. If you can't boil your drinking water, treat it with Potable Aqua, Pristine, or Polar Pure. Follow package instructions exactly.
- \* Beverages, such as tea and coffee, that have been made with boiled water.
- \* Canned or bottled carbonated water and soft drinks. Non-carbonated bottled water is more than likely safe, but do not refill the bottle with untreated tap water.

## ***Be Foodwise!***

Select your food with care. Raw food is subject to contamination. Avoid eating undercooked eggs, fish, shellfish, or meat. Any fruit that can be peeled (such as bananas, mangoes, papaya, passion fruit, oranges, etc.) is typically safe to eat once peeled and the peel discarded.

Avoid salads, salsa, uncooked vegetables, and other cold items that might have been rinsed with contaminated water. Avoid milk and dairy products such as cheese and ice cream.

Do not buy food or drinks from street vendors in any developing country!

## **Insect-borne Diseases**

Many species of insects transmit many different diseases.

Malaria, dengue, yellow fever, filariasis, viral encephalitis, typhus, and other infectious diseases are transmitted by insect bites. There are no vaccines for many insect-borne diseases, so the best protection is to avoid the insect bites that may transmit the disease.

## ***Insects to Avoid***

Mosquitos (both during the day and at night), ticks, sand flies, fleas, tsetse flies, assassin/kissing bugs, black flies, and chiggers.

By practicing the following recommendations, you can achieve a high degree of protection against insect bites:

- \* Use an insect repellent with DEET. No other insect repellent works as well. Check the label for the concentration of DEET and whether or not it is a timed-release formulation; 20 - 40% DEET formulations should be adequate, but a controlled-release product such as 3M Ultrathon will provide longer-lasting protection. Do not get DEET into your eyes, and do not inhale or ingest it. Never use repellent on inflamed or broken skin. Use DEET sparingly; one application will last 4 to 12 hours, depending on the brand. If a suspected reaction to repellent occurs (slurred speech, staggering, lethargy, or seizures), wash treated skin with soap and water and contact a doctor as soon as possible (take the repellent container with you).
- \* For those who cannot tolerate DEET, Picaridin will provide good protection, but it must be applied every 1 - 3 hours.
- \* Cover bare skin by wearing long sleeved shirts, and hat, and long pants. Avoid bright-colored clothing; white is OK.
- \* Use bed nets when sleeping. Tuck them in and check for holes.
- \* Avoid 'smelly' substances such as perfumes, colognes, after shave, scented deodorants, lotions, and fragrant soaps. All these kinds of scents attract insects.
- \* Spray sleeping quarters with pyrethrin insect killer (Raid House and Garden) about one hour before going to sleep.

## ***Malaria***

Malaria is caused by parasites transmitted by the bite of an infected female Anopheles mosquito, and she feeds mostly at night. The deadliest form of malaria is caused by Plasmodium falciparum, and the highest risk for contracting this strain is in Africa.

Thousands of American travelers get malaria each year. Malaria is characterized by fever and flu-like symptoms, including chills, headache, body aches, and malaise; it may even start as diarrhea and stomach upset.

Malaria can be fatal, but malaria is treatable, especially if diagnosed and treated quickly.

When traveling to a malaria area:

- \* Take drugs to prevent malaria exactly as described. Your travel advisor or family physician will help you decide which drug you should take to help prevent malaria. Remember that there is no perfect drug, so there is no 100% guarantee that you will not develop malaria. Seek immediate medical assistance if you develop any malaria-like symptoms.
- \* Avoid donating blood for one year (except for blood to be given to yourself during surgery)
- \* Seek immediate medical care if symptoms of malaria occur, even if you have been home for several weeks.

## ***Yellow Fever***

Yellow fever is rare among travelers and is transmitted by mosquito bites. The illness is named for the yellow skin and eyes (jaundice) which results from liver infection caused by the yellow fever virus.

Proof of yellow fever vaccine is required for Other Paths participants traveling to Africa and South America. When entering countries on these continents, you may be required by law to present an International Certificate of Vaccination (yellow card). The certificate is good for ten years, but the vaccine lasts much longer.

## ***Other Vaccinations***

Other Paths requires that the following vaccinations be up-to-date and documented at least one month prior to traveling outside the United States or Europe:

- \* Yellow fever
- \* Typhoid
- \* Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap)
- \* Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
- \* Polio (IPV)
- \* Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- \* Hepatitis B (HBV)
- \* Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4), if traveling to sub-Saharan Africa December - June

Additionally, Other Paths leadership will check the U.S. State Department international travel Website for updated information on the destination region in the months, weeks, and days preceding each trip and will alert participants and families if travel is banned, restricted or discouraged.

## **U.S. State Department Travel Information**

**[www.state.gov/travel](http://www.state.gov/travel) or 1-888-407-4747 within the United States**



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