ISI Health & Safety Information

Many efforts have been made to ensure your health & safety while you travel on ISI trips. In order to take responsibility for your own health & safety, please read this important information and discuss with your family before you travel. Please alert us of any questions or concerns you may have.

Travel Insurance: All international travelers purchase travel insurance through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) insurance, a policy established by the Office for International Programs. With your ticket purchase, we also purchase a travel insurance policy for you. Generally, this will cover the cost of evacuation out of the country for health or safety reasons. It also offers health insurance that will cover most medical care bills both in the country and extending when you return home. It is extremely important to follow the ISI emergency protocol, contacting the insurance company as soon as you require medical attention, even if the situation is well controlled. Contacting the insurance company is the only way to later submit any bills incurred due to illness for reimbursement.

Passports & Tickets: Please make 2 copies of the front page of your passport. Leave 1 copy in the Ministry Center (you may make copies using the Ministry Center copier). Bring the other copy with you and keep it in a SEPARATE place from your passport in case it gets lost or stolen. Generally you will not need to use your passport once you arrive at your site, so we ask that you lock up your passport & tickets (ISI staff will assist with this when you arrive).

We encourage you to research the country where you will be traveling as much as possible. We also ask that you take advantage of the resources available to you by actively participating in group orientation meetings, using the reading list we provide you, talk with past ISI participants, look up U.S. State Department information at www.travel.state.gov and CDC health guidelines at www.cdc.gov

Dress Code: It is important to pack clothing that will reflect tasteful and appropriate dress. In general, we advise that you wear clothing that will not draw attention to yourself, and that will allow you to avoid offending anyone. We advise you to dress with an appropriate balance between local customs and our own cultural standards (keeping in mind the season and climate in each location, including some range from extreme heat and moderate cold that it’s usually HOT!). In general, this means:

Men: Polo shirt (golf shirt) with a collar or nice looking solid colored shirt.
Khaki pants (camping pants look decent & are breathable)
Closed toed shoes (tennis shoes or hiking shoes are ok)

Women: Simple blouse (avoid spaghetti straps or strapless tops) with long skirt or khaki pants
Khaki pants (camping pants look decent & are breathable)
Closed toes shoes (tennis shoes or hiking shoes are ok)

Shorts are generally not customary to wear in public where we travel. However, it’s a good idea to pack shorts to wear in the evenings to hang out with the group where you will be staying. See the packing list in your Orientation packet for more specific guidelines.

By American standards it may sound sexist, but for women, it’s important to err on the side of dressing conservatively. The way you dress can add to misconceptions that many men have of American women. There may be men who whistle or try to get your attention as you pass on
the street. Generally these men are harmless, as long as you ignore them, travel in groups, and dress appropriately so as not to send any mixed messages.

**Food & Water Safety:** Unless otherwise instructed by a trusted source (ISI staff member or site host), do not drink the water or even use it to brush your teeth at any time in the country. You will be provided with jugs of purified water. Make sure you have a water bottle that you can refill, and drink plenty of purified water every day. While we encourage you to “immerse” yourself as fully as possible, try to avoid eating any foods that are not cooked, boiled, or peeled. In general, all of your meals will be prepared by people who are taking precautions to assure your safety, but the possibility always exists that you will may experience some type of traveler’s diarrhea or other G.I. “rumbling” despite attempts to avoid it. When you do feel ill, it’s best to notify the ISI staff on your trip of your illness at its onset.

If you suffer from food allergies or sensitivities, please be aware we cannot guarantee that our sites have the capability accommodate specific diets. It is best if you assume personal responsibility for your meals, bringing as many snack bars or ready-made alternatives to meals that may be served. Please also be aware that you should discuss your food allergy with your physician team leader prior to travel, in order to establish a plan for dealing with reactions should they occur.

**Political Unrest/Violence:** In the coordination and preparation of ISI sites, great lengths are taken to assure that our travel to and from the sites and our stay at the sites will be safe. While we cannot predict every possible danger, we do take any perceived threats to safety seriously, and will cancel any ISI trip where we cannot determine the safety of our participants. We rely heavily on our contacts at each of the sites to assess level of safety, and keep in regular contact with them. These people are trustworthy sources, most of them are U.S. Citizens or have lived in the U.S., and nearly all of them are working through agencies affiliated with the Catholic Church. We trust that they would recommend, and in the past they have recommended our canceling of ISI trips in cases when levels of safety cannot be properly determined.

**Immunizations**
In order to avoid some common, preventable infectious diseases, immunizations are recommended for each international site. See the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list) for a list of recommended immunizations. Representatives from Loyola’s Travel Clinic are available by appointment to offer the recommended immunizations and to provide prescriptions for other medical prophylaxis. The cost of these medications will be your responsibility. If you have an insurance policy from your parents or spouse, these may be covered under your primary care physician. If you have student insurance, there is no coverage for these and you will have to pay out of pocket. The total cost of these immunizations and prescriptions can range from $150 - $300, depending on the site where you will be traveling.

**Risk of Other Personal Illness and Injury:** While the ISI team has made every effort possible to ensure you are staying in a health environment that would minimize personal illness, the nature of international work is simply unpredictable. Each trip will bring with them an emergency medical kit or will have access to necessary medications locally, in order to treat health emergencies that occur in team members. In the event of potential infectious disease or
allergy exposure, ISI physicians will administer the appropriate treatment, utilize local health resources to the extent appropriate, and, if necessary, you will be sent home early. Particular health concerns to be aware of:

1. **Blood-borne pathogen exposure.** As with all work in patient-care, the risk of exposure to a patient with infected or potentially infected bodily fluid exists in the international setting. Examples of such infections are HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. The most important method of dealing with blood-borne pathogens is prevention of exposure. All students should review the LUHS policy on standard precautions prior to travel (link only accessible on-campus):

   http://data.luhs.org/index.cfm?Key1=250D98F4-E0BF-489E-BD2E-57155A67CEC1&Key2=A00350F3-72A8-4C5D-9919-04166E603079

   Students should also be aware that a Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) guideline exists that all trip physicians will follow should you be exposed. These guidelines were developed by the Department of Infectious disease at Loyola and consultation on individual cases and post-trip follow-up will occur in the event of an exposure. Please review the Loyola PEP guidelines at (link only accessible on-campus):


2. **Transportation.** Motor vehicle accidents are the number one risk to your health while abroad. The ISI staff dedicates time and additional resources to ensure that the transportation modes groups travel in are the safest possible. Should you attempt individual or small-group travel outside of ISI programming while on-site, please recognize different standards in driving and road safety that exist and put your safety in jeopardy.

**Cultural Sensitivity & Personal Conduct**

Please pack any prescription drugs with clearly marked original labels. Be aware that drug laws in these countries are different and are strictly enforced. Use of illicit drugs is strictly prohibited. While use of alcohol is not prohibited on ISI trips, we encourage you to use discretion, realizing that the norms you may have for drinking alcohol in Chicago may not be appropriate in the place where we are being hosted. In addition, norms of personal behavior in social situations may also be different; this can lead to miscommunication which could put yourself or others in potentially dangerous situations. It is common for local people to keep a close eye on visitors while we stay in their community, so be aware of your actions at all times. All in all, it is imperative to constantly be conscious of the impact of our presence and actions on our hosts and on our group. We also must keep in mind that we are sent as “ambassadors” that represent the United States (in international settings), Loyola, and the health professions, and so our decisions and behavior should reflect the community context in which we operate.

**Photos:** In general, ask before taking photos. Some people (especially older people) may have beliefs against having their picture taken. As a group, make a plan to share photos both within your group and with Ministry.

**Social Media and Connectivity:** Please be intentional about your presence on social media. Both HIPAA guidelines and ethical guidelines should assist you in determining appropriate photos or information to post to social media, not posting names, faces, or other identifiers.
Social media can serve as an excellent advocacy platform for the site with whom you are working and/or raising awareness around various aspects of social justice that you may encounter during your trip. Please ask yourself if you are capturing the essence and motivations of your travel as post on social media and avoid temptations of “voluntourism.” When internet is available at your sites, please make a conscious effort to be present to your group, setting “device free” time in order to be fully present to your surroundings in the evenings, on road trips, or whenever the group deems appropriate.

Packing Items of Value: In the interest of safety and simplicity, avoid bringing expensive and unnecessary items. In general, if it’s not on the packing list, and you’re debating about whether to bring something, leave it at home & try to live without it for a couple weeks. Groups revise a site-specific packing list from year to year which will be made available to all participants.

Do NOT travel alone & always communicate to other members of the group where you’re going.

Access to phones/ email: Plan on having limited access to phones and/or email while on your ISI trip. There may be several days when you have NO access. Where appropriate, the trip coordinator (Ministry staff person) will carry a cell phone to be used only in emergency situations. We encourage you to keep contact with family/friends back home limited. ISI staff will contact the Ministry Center 3-4 times during your trip, and your family may call the Ministry Center (708.216.3245) to get updates regarding your trip. In the event of a family emergency, your family should contact the Ministry Center or Ministry staff on their personal phones (use the ISI Emergency Information phone list) or contact the ISI site directly, if absolutely necessary.

ISI Health and Safety Signature

I have read the “ISI Health and Safety Info” document and have discussed such issues with my family. I understand the inherent risks of my participation in ISI and agree to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this document.

Signature: ________________________________________________

Date: _________________________________________________