

Medical Concerns

What shots/vaccines do I need to visit Panama?

It is recommended to be current on routine vaccinations such as tetanus. There are no vaccinations required to enter Panama at this time, but it is recommended to be vaccinated against Hepatitis A and Typhoid.

Zika is a risk in Panama, especially in more remote areas outside of the city. Because Zika infection in a pregnant woman can cause serious birth defects, women who are pregnant should not travel to Panama. All travelers should strictly follow steps to prevent exposure to the Zika virus during and after the trip.

For more general information, please refer to the country information from the U.S. Department of State: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/panama.html>.

Does WYD provide medical insurance?

While nothing has yet been announced, WYD typically provides basic medical coverage in its registration fee, which includes treatment during WYD and nothing more. They will patch you up and send you off. It is recommended that you also have your own medical insurance.

Do I need additional medical insurance?

You should check with your insurance company to see if and under what terms you have coverage in Panama. Many policies will cover you, though you must pay up front and be reimbursed later. If you do not have coverage, you can buy travelers' medical insurance online. We highly recommend Volunteer Card:
<http://www.volunteercard.com/ref/4d4b1caba2c83.html>

What if I have prescription medications?

If you are bringing prescription medication with you to WYD, you should bring the medications in their original bottles. If you are taking a critical medication, you should try to bring a backup prescription order from your doctor in English and in Spanish just in case you lose your medication. Everyone suffers when a group member loses his/her medicine!

Are there other health precautions I should take?

It is a good idea for someone in the group to have a first aid kit containing diarrhea and constipation medication, as well as medications for cold and flu. Airborne or Emergen-C may be helpful supplements for travel as well. It is also important to prepare your body in advance for the demands of a pilgrimage by eating healthfully, exercising, drinking a lot of water, and getting plenty of sleep during the weeks leading up to your trip.

Mosquito repellent is relatively necessary in the city, and very necessary when going outside the city, especially when visiting the rainforest areas. Stronger repellent containing DEET is especially recommended in order to effectively prevent chances of contracting Zika, or less commonly, malaria and yellow fever.