

ANNEX 1¹

How to stay healthy

To stay healthy you should:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles.
- Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by BOTH filtering through an “absolute 1-micron or less” filter AND adding iodine tablets to the filtered water. “Absolute 1micron filters” are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
- If you are going to visit areas where there is risk for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed (see your doctor for a prescription.) This is not generally necessary unless you are spending time in the Terai between March and November.
- Protect yourself from mosquito bites when in areas with mosquitos:
 - Pay special attention to mosquito protection between dusk and dawn. This is when the type of mosquito whose bite transmits malaria is active.
 - Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
 - Use insect repellents that contain DEET (diethylmethyloctanamide).
 - Read and follow the directions and precautions on the product label.
 - Apply insect repellent to exposed skin.
 - Do not put repellent on wounds or broken skin.
 - Do not breathe in, swallow, or get into the eyes (DEET is toxic if swallowed). If using a spray product, apply DEET to your face by spraying your hands and rubbing the product carefully over the face, avoiding eyes and mouth.
 - Unless you are staying in air-conditioned or well-screened housing, use a mosquito bed net impregnated with the insecticide permethrin or deltamethrin. Or, spray the bed net with one of these insecticides if you are unable to find a pretreated bed net.
 - DEET may be used on adults, children, and infants older than 2 months of age. Children under 10 years old should not apply insect repellent themselves. Do not apply to young children’s hands or around eyes and mouth.
 - For details on how to protect yourself from insects and how to use repellents, see Protection against Mosquitoes and Other Arthropods on the CDC website: .
 - If you are visiting friends and relatives in your home country in areas where malaria occurs, please read the [malaria prevention recommendations for recent immigrants](#) on the CDC malaria site.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.

To avoid getting sick:

- Don’t eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Don’t drink beverages with ice.
- Don’t eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don’t share needles with anyone.
- Don’t handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague).
- Don’t swim in fresh water. Salt water is usually safer.

¹ Thanks to Dr Jenn for the following notes on healthcarefor volunteers. Also, refer to <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/> for further information.

Sanitation procedures

In the interest of making your time in Nepal as pleasant as possible (and keeping your time in the toilet and sick bed to a minimum), there are several important points to remember. While strict adherence to the following is not a guarantee of good health, it will go a long way towards keeping you on your feet and out of the diarrhoea ward.

Personal hygiene

- You will be exposed to a very different spectrum of infectious agents (viruses, bacteria, etc.) than your body normally meets at home. While you don't need to live in constant fear, a little caution goes a long way.
- Some of the most common methods of germ spread are hand-to-mouth, hand-to-nose, and hand-to-eye.
- Therefore, like mom always used to say, wash your hands!
- Avoid placing objects like pens, pencils, twigs, and pebbles in your mouth.
- Don't bite your nails, lick your cuticles, rub your eyes, or pick your nose unless you have washed first.
- Always imagine that your hands are covered with millions of germs (which they are).

Water

- Clean drinking water flowing from every tap is a luxury you will not enjoy; Make sure that you have an adequate amount of purified water for drinking, brushing your teeth, gargling, etc.
- In general, sterilized bottled water will be used for internal consumptions.
- **NEVER, NEVER, NEVER** drink any water that hasn't been purified.
- Be sure to brush your teeth and rinse your toothbrush with purified water only. Be careful not to swallow any stray water while washing or bathing.
- Restaurant drinking water (and ice) cannot be assumed to be pure.
- Drink only hot liquids (coffee or tea) or bottled pop when eating out.
- When drinking bottled drinks, use a straw and avoid lip contact with the bottle. Also, don't wipe the top of the bottle with your hand, sleeve, etc.

Disease prevention

- Adequate rest, a good diet, and an upbeat attitude are important ingredients to help keep you healthy.
- If you are working in a warm climate you must also make sure that you drink enough water (purified) to prevent dehydration. If you are not urinating at least three to four times each day, then you are not taking adequate oral fluids.
- Depending upon where you go, you may start taking a drug called chloroquine before departing. This medicine will minimize the chance of getting malaria. Remember to take it according to instructions and on schedule.
- For those who have not had a tetanus booster within five years, look into whether you need a booster.
- To prevent hepatitis A (viral hepatitis), an injection of immune serum globulin might be useful prior to departure.

AIDS

Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a common disease in many countries. Certain precautions should be taken with ALL medical and dental patients to minimize the possibility of spreading this fatal disease.

AIDS is basically hard for us to get. The vast majority of cases are contracted through homosexual encounters, through the sharing of "dirty" needles during IV drug abuse, or by receiving a blood transfusion contaminated with HIV. An increasing number of cases are also developing after heterosexual intercourse outside of a mutually monogamous relationship. Only very rarely has a health care worker not involved in one of the above activities contracted AIDS. The following guidelines are recommended:

- Wear gloves when coming in contact with any patient mucous membrane (mouth, nose, vagina, and rectum), non-intact skin, or moist body substances (i.e., blood, urine, feces).
- Wash hands before and after working with patients
- If Dentists are with the team they and helpers will wear masks and goggles (or glasses).
- Place all used “sharps” (needles or other instruments capable of cutting or puncturing) in the rigid red containers provided in the clinic. Do not put needle cap back on needle prior to disposal.
- Handle all laboratory specimens as if the patient were known to be infected.
- Carefully cover any open sores or cuts that you may have, and do not allow them to come in contact with any patient fluids.
- Dispose of all patient waste fluids or tissue in double plastic bags.

If you follow these guidelines, the risk of getting AIDS will be negligible.

Finally, by being careful, paying close attention to these guidelines, and by using good common sense, the likelihood of remaining healthy while working in your host country is excellent.

Traveller’s diarrhoea

What causes traveller’s diarrhoea?

- People get traveller’s diarrhoea by eating food and drinking water that contains germs.
- People can get this illness in areas of the world where drinking water is not clean.
- Cooks and food handlers may have the germs that cause traveller’s diarrhoea on their hands, but they may not get sick themselves.
- In the same way, people who live in a place often drink tap water that contains these germs, but they do not get diarrhoea. This is because their bodies are used to the germs.
- When people travel to a new place, they are more likely to become sick because they lack protective antibodies (infection-fighting agents in the blood) that attack these germs.

How can I avoid traveller’s diarrhoea?

When you are visiting an area where the water may not be clean, you should be careful about the following:

Do not:

- drink tap water and do not use it to brush your teeth
- drink bottled water if the seal on the bottle has been broken
- use ice made from tap water
- drink milk or eat dairy products that have not been pasteurised (heated to a temperature where all the germs are killed)
- eat raw fruits and vegetables unless they can be peeled and you are the one who peels them
- eat lettuce and other leafy, raw vegetables (like spinach) and do not eat cup-up fruit salad
- eat raw or rare (slightly cooked) meat or fish
- eat food from people who sell food on the street

When in a place where its possible to get traveller’s diarrhoea, what is safe to drink or eat?

- drink soft drinks that are carbonated (drinks with a gas called carbon dioxide in them)
- hot drinks, such as tea or coffee
- drink carbonated or non-carbonated bottled water as long as you are the one who breaks the seal on the bottle
- eat raw fruits or vegetables that can be peeled, as long as you are the one who peels them
- eat food that is served hot
- eat meat that is well cooked

If I get traveller's diarrhoea, what should I drink?

If you get traveller's diarrhoea, you need to replace the fluid loss by drinking a rehydrating solution. If you cannot find a rehydration solution, you should drink fruit juices, caffeine-free soft drinks, or bottled water and you should eat salted crackers.

Should I use medicine to treat traveller's diarrhoea?

- Medicines you get from your doctor (such as Lomotil) and medicines you can buy in a drugstore (such as Imodium or Pepto-Bismol) often can make you feel better more quickly.
- You may also need antibiotics.
- Medicines can be very helpful if you have diarrhoea three or more times in less than eight hours, and if you also have other problems, such as cramping, fever, or blood in your stools.
- Before you go on a trip, ask your doctor what medicines to take if you get diarrhoea.