

Health Guidelines

ARGENTINA

GENERAL INFORMATION

To protect your health in South America, you need certain pre-departure immunizations followed by reasonable health precautions while in the country. The following health guidelines and requirements are based on years of experience and the current recommendations from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). They are designed to inform you of health concerns that may be present in Argentina and other program destinations especially as you venture to smaller cities off the usual tourist track, or spend time in small villages and rural areas for extended periods. Although no information sheet can address every conceivable contingency, the following health guidelines and requirements are an attempt to provide you with a standard, which if followed, should optimize good health during your stay abroad.

You may find that local customs and practice, as well as varying US physicians' approaches, at times conflict with these guidelines. It is essential that you review these health guidelines and requirements with your physician, to discuss individual issues such as pre-existing medical problems, mental health status, and / or allergies to particular drugs. Any further questions or concerns should be directed to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta (www.cdc.gov/travel) or to your own physician.



PREVENTION OF INSECT-BORNE ILLNESS

The CDC offers a number of suggestions on how to decrease the likelihood of insect bites, and thus avoid contracting some of the illnesses outlined below. Some suggestions include:

- Wearing long-sleeve shirts and pants in areas / times of day that are more mosquito prone
- Using an appropriate bug repellent. The CDC recommends DEET, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), and / or Picaridin.
- Use Permethrin treated clothing

Dengue

Dengue is a viral disease and is transmitted by mosquitoes which bite primarily in the daytime. It occurs in rural and urban areas. There is no licensed vaccine against it, but personal protective measures against mosquito bites are effective in prevention. Insect repellents, protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and pants, plus the use of permethrin-treated mosquito netting are therefore essential. The disease causes considerable discomfort (fever, body aching), but is self-limited in adults in most cases.

Chikungunya

Chikungunya is an arboviral infection that is transmitted by day-biting *Aedes* mosquitoes. It is prevalent in tropical Africa and Asia, parts of Central and South America, and the Caribbean. A few cases have recently been confirmed in Argentina. Symptoms are typically fever and joint pain. There is no licensed vaccine against it, but insect precautions and personal protective measures (especially during peak times (early morning and late afternoon) are the main prevention strategy.



Zika

Zika is a viral infection that is also transmitted by the bite of the *Aedes* mosquitoes. Symptoms include mild fever, rash, conjunctivitis (red eyes), joint or muscle pain and headache. The disease causes considerable discomfort, but is mild and self-limited, lasting for several days to a week. There are no vaccines or medications available to prevent or treat Zika infections therefore students should be vigilant in using insect precautions and personal protection measures against day-biting mosquitoes (see insect precautions in dengue section).

Leishmaniasis (cutaneous, monocutaneous and visceral)

Reported primarily throughout the country in Paraguay and to the northern and southeast regions of Brazil. It is a protozoan infection that causes skin ulcers and is transmitted by the bite of sand flies. Insect precautions are recommended.

PREVENTION OF FOOD- AND WATER-BORNE ILLNESSES

Tap water is generally safe to drink and cook with in Buenos Aires and other major cities and it is usually safe as well to eat fresh fruits, vegetables and salads and to put ice in your drinks. Food and water safety however, cannot be guaranteed from street food purchases and the water quality is variable in rural areas.

If you are unsure of the food and water quality in the area you are visiting, check with a reliable source before using. If in any doubt, and for visits to program excursions and rural areas, take all the recommended precautions and respect certain do's and don'ts:

DO WASH your hands scrupulously with non-contaminated water and soap before eating and snacking.

DO DRINK

- Bottled or canned beverages (water, soda, soft drinks, beer, wine) from a trusted source (ensure caps are sealed).
- Hot beverages (coffee, tea).
- Water that has reached a rolling boil for at least one minute at sea level (longer at higher altitudes).
- Carbonated mineral water.

DO USE

- Commercial iodide or tinctured liquid iodine to treat water, **ONLY** if bottled water (from a trusted source) is not available and boiling water is not possible. Chlorine in various forms is less reliable than iodine. These provide substantial protection when added to tap water.

DO EAT

- Cooked vegetables, fruits with thick covering (citrus, bananas, and melons); and well-washed raw fruits and vegetables.
- Meat or fish that is thoroughly cooked (pork and lamb should be very well done).
- Pasteurized dairy products from large commercial dairies.

DON'T EAT

- Unwashed or unpeeled raw fruits and vegetables.
- Fruits that do not have a thick, disposable outside covering.
- Rare or raw meat or fish or shellfish.
- Dairy products from small, independent vendors without pasteurizing facilities, including food of any kind that has been left out in the sun, especially custards, creams, and mayonnaise.
- Raw (unpasteurized) milk or milk products. Tuberculosis and brucellosis, both serious diseases are transmitted in this way, so the consumption of unpasteurized milk and milk products should be strictly avoided.

There may be times when refusing an offer of food or beverage, even a drink with ice or avoiding a salad will be considered rude. You must decide for yourself, but polite refusals, thought out in advance, are often handy

Diarrhea-Producing Infections

In all of the countries visited on this program, there is a minimal to moderate incidence of diarrhea among travelers. Traveler's diarrhea is a self-limited diarrhea lasting from a few to several days, characterized by watery, non-bloody bowel movements. Traveler's diarrhea usually requires no treatment other than fluid replacement including ORS (the World Health Organization's oral rehydration solution, which comes in package form) or other homemade solutions such as 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon baking soda, and 2–3 tablespoons sugar or honey in 1 liter of **clean** water or carbonated soda diluted by one half. Antidiarrheals such as Imodium or Lomotil may be used short-term in some circumstances. Pepto Bismol in large amounts and certain antibiotics (doxycycline, sulfa-TMP, ciprofloxacin) can prevent or attenuate the infection. Antibiotics are indicated for more severe cases of traveler's diarrhea.

A note on swimming: Avoid swimming or wading in fresh water. Many parasites and bacteria live in water and can cause serious illness. Properly

chlorinated pools and salt water are generally safe from infectious diseases.

Typhoid Fever

Typhoid is an infection caused by a particular species of the salmonella bacterium. It is spread by contaminated food and water. Symptoms include fever, severe toxicity, rash, and in about half the cases, bloody diarrhea. Untreated, there is a 30% mortality rate. Vaccines are 60–70% effective in prevention. One vaccine involves a single injection, with immunity lasting 2 years. A second one is administered orally every other day for 4 doses, and lasts 5 years. Antibiotic resistance has been developing, but treatment of the disease with certain well-known antibiotics is usually effective. As with all diarrheal illnesses, careful dietary discretion continues to be the main line of defense.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious virus that causes liver inflammation. It is most commonly spread through contaminated food and water. Most Americans have not previously been exposed to the hepatitis A virus and are at risk of contracting the disease during travel to areas where the disease is more prevalent. A very effective vaccine is available and should be administered 2–3 weeks prior to travel.



OTHER DISEASES

Prevention of Animal Bites and Infections

Rabies is a viral disease almost always caused by animal bites (especially dogs and bats). Rabies is not a concern in Argentina as it is mostly limited to the Salta and Jujuy provinces. *Strict adherence to*

the following is important for a safe and rabies-free experience:

- Avoid bites from all animals and especially avoid handling or feeding puppies, kittens, monkeys, or other animals. They can have rabies before it is obvious.
- If you have been bitten or have had direct contact with the saliva of a suspected rabid animal, immediately wash the affected area with a soap solution and running water thoroughly to neutralize and to rinse out the virus. **Then proceed immediately for post-exposure treatment**, the sooner the better; depending on the location of the bite, you may have little time.
- If at all possible, the animal should be captured and kept under cautious surveillance until the diagnosis and therapy are completed. If capture is not possible, a clear description of the animal and the circumstance of contact should be carefully recorded.

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is a bacterial disease spread by airborne droplets from a person with untreated pulmonary TB or by ingestion of TB-contaminated unpasteurized milk products. Transmission is more likely in conditions of crowding and poverty. A TB skin test can indicate prior exposure to tuberculosis and is required prior to travel (unless already known to be positive). A repeat test is recommended after returning to the US even if the pre-departure test was negative.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a serious and often chronic viral infection of the liver. Since this type of hepatitis is most often acquired from contact with infected blood, sexual contact (as with HIV), or skin-to-skin contact of mutual open cuts and sores, appropriate precautions to avoid these types of exposure are necessary. This includes avoiding getting tattoos, or ear/body piercings and avoiding cuddling children with sores or draining insect bites. A series of three immunizing injections is recommended. This series should be initiated as early as possible so that at least two doses are taken prior to departure. This will

provide partial protection. The third shot should be taken five months after the second dose, and may be given after returning home to achieve full, long-lasting immunity. An accelerated schedule can also be used as an alternative.

AIDS and Blood Supplies

AIDS is a concern worldwide. AIDS is an acquired immune deficiency that can result in life-threatening infections. The HIV virus is transmitted by way of bodily fluids from an infected person. Other potential routes of infected blood transmission such as tattooing, body piercing and needle sharing must be strictly avoided.

IMMUNIZATIONS FOR ARGENTINA

Immunizations fall under two categories: 1) those that are required for The Experiment admission and 2) those that are recommended to protect your health and well-being by building up your immune defenses against specific prevalent diseases. In addition, certain basic immunizations are required by US law.

Plan ahead at least 7 weeks, as laid out in the sample schedule at the end of these instructions since some immunizations require more than one dose for effectiveness. The physician administering the inoculations should record all immunizations on the International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP, also known as the WHO card). The WHO card should be kept with you at all times while in the host country. ***If for some reason you are unable to obtain a WHO card or your WHO card is lost it will be sufficient to carry a copy of your immunization record with you.***

Required (for participation in program):

- **MMR (measles, mumps, rubella):** You will need to be immunized if you have not had 2 doses of live measles vaccine.
- **Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis:** The primary child series is required. Boosters (Td or Tdap) are effective for 10 years. If you are uncertain when

you had your last injection, we recommend that you get another booster.

RECOMMENDED (as a health precaution - consult your physician):

- **Typhoid:** This vaccine is strongly urged as a viable protective measure. The vaccine is given either orally or by injection. Discuss the relative merits of each with your doctor.
- **Hepatitis A:** Hepatitis A vaccine, which provides long-term immunity, is recommended.
- **Hepatitis B:** A series of 3 immunization injections is recommended. See section on Hepatitis B.
- **Influenza:** Influenza vaccine should be considered for any individual wishing to decrease risk of influenza or non-specific respiratory illness especially those who are at high risk for complications from influenza including those with asthma, COPD, diabetes, chronic cardiovascular disease and immunocompromised conditions.



Enjoy your trip! Please note that these guidelines, while robust, are intended to help ensure that you have a healthy and memorable trip.