Argentina: Art, Memory, and Social Transformation
GENERAL INFORMATION

To protect your health in Argentina, 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. They are designed to inform you of health concerns that may be present in Argentina 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 and 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 FOOD- AND WATER-BORNE ILLNESSES

There is minimal incidence of diarrhea among travelers in Argentina. 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. It is always recommended that you observe food and beverage precautions.

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
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 recommended prior to travel (unless already known to be positive). A repeat test is also 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.

HIV/AIDS and Blood Supplies
HIV/AIDS is a concern worldwide. The HIV virus is transmitted by way of bodily fluids from an infected person. HIV is spread primarily by having anal or vaginal sex or sharing drug injection equipment with a person who has HIV. AIDS is an acquired immune deficiency that can result in life-threatening infections and is the most advanced stage of the HIV infection. It is the student's responsibility to protect himself/herself from acquiring the disease through sexual transmission. Students anticipating even the possibility of sexual activity are strongly urged to bring their own condom supply. Other potential routes of infected blood transmission such as tattooing, body piercing, and needle sharing must be strictly avoided.

With regard to blood transfusions, our Academic Directors have identified hospitals, through consultation with the local US embassy, where safe blood is available. In a life-threatening situation, the risks versus benefits of an emergency blood transfusion must be examined carefully and a decision made based on the best information at hand.

Coronavirus COVID-19
COVID-19 is a newly identified respiratory virus that was discovered in China. Cases of the virus have spread rapidly in China and have also been reported in over 100 other countries, including the United States. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared this disease a global pandemic for the worldwide spread of a new disease for which most people do not have immunity. COVID-19 is usually spread through direct contact with an infected person as well as through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is unknown if the virus can spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects. Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, and shortness of breath, and may appear 2-14 days after exposure. The illness can also cause body aches, sore throat, vomiting and diarrhea. Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and
death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases. There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus and protect yourself!

- **Clean your hands** often—wash your hands carefully and frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash.

- **Clean AND disinfect** frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick. Put distance between yourself and other people if possible.

- **Inform your Academic Director immediately** if you have a pulmonary disease or any respiratory illness; have a fever or feeling sick; if you have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19; and/or have recently traveled from an area with widespread or ongoing community spread of COVID-19.

- **Seek medical care, contact ISOS and a doctor**, if you develop symptoms;

- **Avoid travel if you are sick or have a fever.** Your Academic Director will make appropriate accommodations for students who are ill.

- **Wear a facemask** if you are sick, especially when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider’s office.

- **Most importantly, stay connected:** Communicate daily with your SIT Academic Director. SIT continues to update its contingency and evacuation plans to ensure that we are prepared to take appropriate action in the event of a change in circumstances.

### Air Quality

Students with a history of asthma or allergies should be warned that air pollution in all major cities is steadily worsening, resulting in an increasing incidence of respiratory illness. Asthmatics should carry emergency medicines for severe asthma attacks.

**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.

### IMMUNIZATIONS FOR ARGENTINA

Immunizations fall under two categories: 1) those that are required for SIT Study Abroad 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 is to be 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 and enter it on your WHO card.
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.

### SAMPLE IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE FOR ARGENTINA

To assist your planning, we suggest the following schedule for required and recommended immunizations. For your own comfort and protection, do not leave shots to the last minute!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before the start of program</th>
<th>Immunizations</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 weeks</td>
<td>Influenza</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>Typhoid (injection or oral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>Tetanus (Td,Tdap) booster</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>Hepatitis A vaccine</td>
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With reasonable attention to health and hygiene rules, your stay in Argentina should be a healthy one. Aside from minor ailments due to adjustments to the new food, water and climate, the large majority of SIT Study Abroad students remain healthy throughout the semester. We do, however, recommend you see your physician when you return to the US to test for any possible lingering infection contracted overseas.

**Take good care of yourself!**