GENERAL INFORMATION
To protect your health in the Cities in the 21st Century program, 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, Spain, and South Africa based on your scheduled program itinerary. 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 specific 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 ILLNESSES
Dengue
Dengue is a viral disease and is transmitted by mosquitoes which bite primarily in the daytime. It occurs in urban as well as rural areas in Argentina including the city of Buenos Aires. 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.

Chikungunya
Chikungunya is an arboviral infection that is transmitted by day-biting Aedes mosquitoes. Low risk exists in South Africa. 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.

Yellow Fever
Yellow fever is a viral disease, characterized by severe hepatitis with fever, which is transmitted by mosquitoes. The disease occurs only in parts of
Africa and South America. It may be prevented by avoiding mosquito bites (see “personal protective measures” in the Malaria section) and taking the vaccination shots, which are available at any yellow fever vaccination center (consult your physician for the nearest center).

Please note: Since Argentina is considered a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission, a yellow fever certificate of vaccination is required for entry as you cross borders into Spain and South Africa.

PREVENTION OF FOOD- AND WATER-BORNE ILLNESSES

Tap water is generally safe to drink and cook with in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Barcelona Spain and Cape Town, South Africa. 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. For your program excursions it is recommended that you drink bottled or canned beverages (water, soda, soft drinks- ensure caps are sealed) and eat cooked vegetables, fruits with thick covering (citrus, bananas, and melons) and well-washed raw fruits and vegetables. Meat or fish should be thoroughly cooked and pork and lamb should be well done. Use only pasteurized dairy products from large commercial dairies.

Diarrhea-Producing Infections

“Traveler’s diarrhea” is the most common form of diarrhea in Argentina, and South Africa. This 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.

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.

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.

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.

OTHER DISEASES

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease almost always caused by animal bites (especially dogs and bats). Risk occurs in South Africa, and, therefore, you should take measures to prevent it. Given the serious danger posed by rabies as a uniformly fatal disease, follow these important guidelines:
- Consider pre-exposure immunization (if available).
- 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 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 is recommended prior to travel (unless already known to be positive) as this test can indicate prior exposure to tuberculosis. A repeat test is also recommended after returning to the US even if the pre-departure test was negative.

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 mainly 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 him/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 Country Coordinators 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.

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.

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. Practice social distancing.** Put distance between yourself and other people if possible.

- **Inform your Program Director and Trustee Fellow 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.

- **Contact ISOS and a medical doctor,** if you develop symptoms;

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

- **Wear a facemask,** 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:** especially during your Independent Study Project or Internship. Communicate daily with your SIT Program Director and Trustee Fellow. 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.

### IMMUNIZATIONS FOR CITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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.

![International Certificate of Vaccination](image)

Immunization against **Yellow Fever** is required for entry into Spain and South Africa-you will be coming from a country in South America (Argentina) with risk of yellow fever transmission. Plan ahead at least 10 weeks, as laid out in the sample schedule at the end of these instructions, since some immunizations require more than one dose for effectiveness. Travel immunizations including yellow fever vaccine should be recorded by a medical provider on the International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP, also known as the WHO card). The yellow WHO card should be kept with you at all times while in the host country.
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 another booster.

- **Yellow Fever:** Certification of yellow fever vaccination (enter it on your WHO card) is required.

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.

- **Rabies:** Follow carefully the special instructions in the section on rabies.

- **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. It is recommended for all travelers of any age especially those who are at high risk for complications from influenza including those with asthma, COPD, diabetes, chronic cardiovascular disease and immunocompromised conditions.

**IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE**

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>10 weeks</td>
<td>Yellow fever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 weeks</td>
<td>First rabies pre-exposure (Imovax, RabAvert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 weeks</td>
<td>Second rabies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>Tetanus (Td, Tdap), if req.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>Typhoid (injection or oral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>Third rabies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>Hepatitis A vaccine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With reasonable attention to health and hygiene rules, your stay on the Cities in the 21st program should be a healthy one. Aside from minor ailments due to adjustments to the new food, water and climate, this is the experience of the large majority of SIT Study Abroad students. We do, however, recommend you see your physician on returning to the US in order to test for any possible lingering infection contracted overseas.

**Take good care of yourself!**

Cities in the 21st Century 2020