



**Rotary International District 5020
Youth Exchange Program**



**Helping Students To Manage Their
Health and Safety on Exchange**

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Staying Healthy and Safe

- **Just like in your home country, your personal health and safety is mostly your responsibility**
- **Accidents happen, but they happen less often when you focus on prevention.**
- **There are things you can do to prepare for emergencies**

Staying Healthy and Safe

- **Minimum of 4 four envelopes**
- **Give one to your counselor**
- **Give one to each of your host families as soon as you know who they are**
- **Give another to the parents of a close friend (optional)**



Contents of Emergency Envelopes

- **Copies of your insurance card (s) with instructions for use.**
- **Emergency phone/e-mail list- folks at home**
- **Phone/e-mail list of host families and counselor**
- **Photocopies of passport**
- **Extra passport photos (in case of theft)**

Contents (cont)

- **Credit card info in case of theft**
- **Copies of prescriptions for medication or eye glasses/ contacts**
- **A copy of your Medical Release form signed by your parent/guardian**

Information to keep in your wallet

- **Copy of your passport**
- **Insurance card**
- **Allergy or other medical info that
Emergency Personnel should know**
- **Phone numbers of host families and
counselor**
- **Directions to home of first host family
with references for car, bus or taxi
arrival**

Medications:

- **Let us know if there are any medications not listed on your application form**
- **For an ongoing prescription bring a minimum of 12 refills**
- **Always carry medications in their original container**

Medications (cont) :

- **Bring a small supply of over the counter medications for pain relief, cold, cough flu and menstrual cramps**
- **Carry all prescription medications in your carry-on luggage**
- **Feminine hygiene products can be expensive overseas**

Eyeglasses or Contacts

- **Pack an extra pair of glasses**
- **Bring a copy of your prescription**
- **Bring 13/14 month supply of contacts**
- **Bring as much contact lens solution as you can- it is very expensive overseas**

Immunizations

- **Is your Tetanus and MMR up to date?**
- **Hepatitis A vaccine- 6-8 weeks pre-departure**
- **Hepatitis B- start now**



Other Immunizations

- **Those living in or traveling in tropical climates will need other immunizations**
- **Check with your local health department**
- **Cross reference with the CDC (Center for Disease Control) website in your sponsor country**
- **Protect against malaria as well**
- **Your family doc may not be up to date on travel info**

Nutrition

- **Eat healthily and you will feel better emotionally and physically**
- **Weight fluctuations are normal in an exchange year- most students gain weight initially**
- **Bring clothes that are not tight fitting**

Nutrition (cont.)

- **Drinking water-
take your cues
from your family**
- **Be especially cautious in
the first weeks**
- **Street Food: Eat at the places where
your family and friends eat - they know
how to choose**



Exercise:

- **Helps you feel better emotionally and physically**
- **Gives you more energy**
- **Helps with feelings of depression**
- **You will sleep better**
- **Gives you some quiet or alone time**
- **Bring comfortable walking shoes and other important sporting gear**

Physiological Aspects of Culture Shock

- **Jet lag-one day of recovery for every hour in time change**
- **Sleep disturbances**
- **Headaches**
- **Stomach aches**
- **Loss of appetite**
- **Not feeling quite in your body**

If you feel ill

- **Don't pretend you feel well (*The trouble with super heroes is what to do between phone booths*)**
- **Tell your host parents**
- **Antibiotics only work for bacterial infections- take them only when needed**
- **Be careful about buying medications over the counter**

If you feel ill (cont)

- **If you have to see a physician - find a translator**
- **Remember that health beliefs are part of a culture: a suggestion or comfort measure may seem strange to you. It just might work!**

Growing up in a Safe, Secure Community

- **You are security-impaired!**
- **You need to cultivate a new awareness and sense of vigilance**
- **Be careful exploring your new city by yourself when you first arrive**
- **Know how to use a public phone and carry phone money always**

Sexuality Rules - Gender Roles

- **Sexism is all over the world - in North America and Northern Europe it is just more subtle**
- **You don't know the rules of your new culture regarding gender roles**
- **You may not like the rules about gender roles**
- **You are not going to change a culture's rules in one year- Beware of trying!**

Whistles, catcalls and other unsolicited attention

- **Ask advice from same gender friends and host family members**
- **You may be sending messages that you are not aware of**
- **Get advice about where the lines of acceptable/tolerated behavior and unacceptable sexual behavior are**

When the Line Gets Crossed --

- **There is a difference between feeling confused and uncomfortable and feeling unsafe**
- **Experiencing discomfort is part of being in a new culture**
- **If you do not feel safe there is a problem that needs to be addressed**



If you Feel Unsafe!!

- **Trust the little voice inside you that is saying that this is not OK**
- **You need to tell someone: host parent, counselor, teacher, another trusted adult**
- **Rotary is committed to keeping you safe. We will intervene to keep you safe**



Serious Relationships During Your Exchange

- **It will complicate your life**
- **It can potentially limit the development of a wide circle of friends and experiences**
- **It is painfully difficult to maintain a relationship over time and distance**
- **Cross cultural relationships have a special set of challenges**

Sexual Relations during your Exchange Year

- **Sex change every relationship**
- **Sex complicated a relationship**
- **Sexual Intimacy means different things to different people. It is complicated by gender roles, cultural differences and your imperfect communication**
- **It is risky business**

Alcohol

- **Most other countries are more relaxed about alcohol and teenagers**
- **Still there are rules - spoken and unspoken - and it's not OK to break those rules**



Drinking Alcohol

- **Clouds your otherwise very good judgment**
- **Increases your vulnerability**
- **Is dangerous in combination with driving, bicycling, skiing and sex (Duh!)**
- **Is something to be intentional about**

Other Health Issues

- **Smoking**
- **Tattooing**
- **Piercings**



Other Safety Issues (That might make you a geek, but not an organ donor)

- **Wear a bicycle helmet- you might start a trend**
- **Buckle up in a car always!**
- **If you are walking/ bicycling at night wear something reflective**
- **Always have a backup plan (which does not include you driving)**

Healthy is as Healthy Does

- **Your health is primarily your responsibility**
- **The issues overseas are not much different than they are at home**
- **This year will be good practice for managing your health as a university student or young adult**