

BEFORE YOU GO, YOU SHOULD KNOW

Volume 3: Staying healthy while in the U.S.

Staying healthy will help you have a much more positive experience while in the U.S. Two of the major components contributing to a healthy lifestyle in the U.S. are an understanding of the health care system and how to approach American food.

A major difference between the U.S. and many other countries is how the health care system works. In the U.S., healthcare is privatized which makes it very expensive in many cases to receive treatment and medicine. As a Fulbrighter, you receive an ASPE healthcare benefits package. Before you arrive in the U.S., you should familiarize yourself with some of the processes of the health care system in the U.S. and determine if there are medicines, treatments or immunizations you should receive before arriving.

In order to prepare, we recommend researching the following:

Go to the ASPE website (www.usdos.sevencorners.com), to familiarize yourself with the website and the information provided therein.

- ◆ What is covered by the benefits plan?
- ◆ What is not covered?
- ◆ What is a claim form? When do I need it? Where do I find it (on the website) and where do I submit it?
- ◆ What is the Dental plan on ASPE?
- ◆ What are the doctors near my host institution?

If you have a pre-existing condition, ASPE will not be able to cover costs associated with treating it. If there is a medicine you often take for a pre-existing condition, we recommend you secure enough in your home country for the year in the U.S. Otherwise it may become very expensive. Please also check with your supervisor to see if you need to complete the medical form of your host institution. If you are required to have immunizations, you may be able to receive them in your home country. In some instances, the host institution requires immunizations received in the U.S. Despite the possible cost, we recommend seeing a doctor if you are injured or ill.

Food in the U.S. and making healthy choices

Food is one of the most difficult aspects to adjust to when living in a new place. It can be especially hard in the U.S. where familiar foods from your home country are rare, including certain ingredients and Halal dishes. Many cafeterias at universities and colleges are full of fast food including pizza, burgers, fried chicken, and French fries. It can seem hard to avoid having physical discomfort and health problems.

In order to minimize the adjustment to food in the U.S. and potential health problems, we recommend moderation and making healthy choices. See what your cafeteria has to offer; vegetarian options tend to be healthier as well as soups and sandwiches (depending on what's in the sandwich!).

In order to prepare we recommend you research:

Check your host institution website to find out:

- ◆ Does the health center have information about making nutritious choices?
- ◆ Does the international students office offer advice about adjusting to food in the U.S.?
- ◆ What are the local restaurants and grocery stores in the community? Do they offer ethnic food?

Use the internet (Google or other search engine) to research topics such as:

- ◆ Tips for eating healthy at college/how to eat healthy at college
- ◆ Nutrition advice for college students

Recommended tasks:

- ◆ Go on the internet and find listings for doctors in the area of your university. You may be able to email them to inquire if they accept ASPE. If you cannot email them, you can call them after you arrive.
- ◆ Look at the menus for a week at your host institution's cafeteria. Plan the healthy choices you would make for one week.

Enjoy and stay healthy!

Regards,
FLTA Staff