



Connecting Children to the Care They Need

Medical Teams Abroad Handbook



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**Child’s Passport to Health**

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1. **Welcome**

Thank you for your involvement in **Child’s Passport to Health Medical Teams Abroad program (“MTA”).** According to the World Health Organization, more than half of the world’s population today does not have access to adequate health care. There are numerous reasons for this situation: lack of economic resources; poor transportation and communication systems; competing priorities; absence of political commitment; poorly developed health care infrastructure; and lack of human resources.

**Our Mission**: “To improve the ongoing quality of life of children through surgical/medical intervention and education, in partnership with biological and host families as well as the community”.

**Our Values**: “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others” *Mahatma Gandhi*

**Child’s Passport to Health** is a U.S. non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. We rely on the generosity of volunteers and donors to bring health care to children around the world. Thank you for donating your time, talent, medical equipment and supplies, and financial support! Your travel expenses may be deductible as a charitable donation – please consult your tax advisor. A Volunteer Expense Tracking sheet is attached at the end of this Handbook.

1. **About Child’s Passport to Health**

**Child’s Passport to Health** is an all-volunteer, charitable organization based in Washington State. We work with international and local agencies, doctors, hospitals and other non-profit partners to bring children to the U.S. for donated medical care they cannot receive in their own countries, due to lack of funds or medical resources.

While in the U.S. for care, children stay with a host family and are not only given the opportunity to continue their academic education, but are educated about their medical condition, including self-care. Once their treatment is complete, they return home.

We serve children from 0 to 18 years of age for a variety of medical conditions. Most of these children come to us through our non-profit partners (link to Partners page), although some also apply to our program individually.

We are excited about our future as an organization and our next steps in this journey. However we are only a piece of the puzzle needed to complete the total wellness of each child. It is our sincere hope that if you are reading this you will be moved to become involved in some way to walk with these children in the journey of a lifetime!

1. **Volunteering Abroad with CP2H**

CP2H reaches out to meet the needs of children around the world, in countries such as **Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Rwanda,** and **Vietnam**. Teams of volunteer medical professionals and field support personnel provide free on-site surgery and free or reduced cost clinic medical care to children who cannot afford health care or access the medical services they need. Teams also provide much needed medical education to overseas medical providers.

CP2H Medical Team will be working with children and families in the areas of **Podiatry,** and hopefully other medical needs.

CP2H Medical Teams are often made up of Volunteers such as:

**Medical/Professional Field Support**    
Surgeons Logistic Coordinators  
Anesthesiologists Registration, Assessment Coordinators  
Podiatrists Translators (esp. Spanish, French and Vietnamese)  
Physicians Education (ESL and Computer)  
Physicians Assistants Medical Records Coordinators  
Nurse Practitioners   
Surgical Nurses, Nurses   
Audiologists  
Dentists/Dental Hygienists  
Physical/Occupational Therapists

**Getting Started as an CP2H Volunteer:**

* **Complete a MTA Volunteer Application. Must be received by CP2H staff at least 8 weeks prior to your trip.** The MTA Volunteers Forms are at: http://achildspassporttohealth.org/ or call the CP2H at 425-830-0875.
* Volunteers pay for their own airfare, food, lodging and insurance.
* CP2H teams take all medical supplies with them. You will be asked to help carry supplies as part of your luggage.
* Team Members participate in **Team Work Parties** as requested to prepare for your Trip.
* Team Members participate in **Fundraising** for CP2H and for your Trip.
* Check with your Medical Malpractice insurance carrier regarding coverage issues. CP2H does not provide medical malpractice insurance for medical trips.

1. **Responsibilities of Team Members and Team Leader**

Medical Team volunteers are selected on the basis of their high qualifications and their ability to represent CP2H, the U.S., and other home countries with the utmost professionalism. **Courtesy and respect for local customs are essential.** The following lists are provided to facilitate a successful experience for volunteers and to facilitate maximum benefit for the people being served.

**Team Member Responsibilities**

1. Represent CP2H and support its Mission and Vision.
2. Adhere to the CP2H Code of Ethics (signed by all Volunteers).
3. Follow CP2H Standard Operating Procedures (provided by Team Leader).
4. Perform activities/procedures within your current scope of practice and field of expertise.
5. Support Positive and Effective Team Work (**be flexible; be positive, be respectful**).
6. Respect Decision-Making Authority of Team Leader.
7. Support Team Safety and Security.
8. Screen for **International Inbound** prospective patients\* Inform Team Leader
9. Obey the laws and respect the cultural traditions of the Host country.
10. Do not engage in political activities or promote any political agenda in the Host country.
11. Do not provide religious materials or persuasion in the Host country.
12. Complete Trip Evaluation.

**Team Leader Responsibilities**

1. Represent CP2H and support its Mission and Vision.
2. Adhere to the CP2H Code of Ethics and ensure Team Members do the same.
3. Ensure CP2H Standard Operating Procedures are followed at all times.
4. Coordinate activities and arrangements with Host.
5. Exercise Decision-Making Authority in a positive and effective manner.
6. Support Team Safety and Security, and ensure Team Members do the same.
7. Facilitate Conflict Resolution among Team Members, if necessary.
8. Manage in-country financial obligations.
9. Screen for **International Inbound** prospective patients\* Initiate paperwork as applicable.
10. Ensure that all Team Members: (a) Obey the laws and respect the cultural traditions of the Host country; (b) Do not engage in political activities or promote any political agenda in the Host country; and (c) Do not provide religious materials or persuasion in the Host country.
11. Complete Trip Evaluation, Trip Report, and Financial Summary.

**\*International Inbound Program:** At times a child seen in a foreign country needs medical care not available there. Your Team Leader has a CP2H packet to begin the process to bring a child to the US for medical care. These children are flown to the US at no charge and stay with a CP2H volunteer host family until their medical procedures are complete, at which time they are returned home.

1. **Your Personal Health**

Volunteers should be in **good personal health** to participate with a Medical Team Abroad, as determined by you and your physician. Medical Trips Abroad can be physically and emotionally strenuous.

**It is imperative that you exercise appropriate medical practices and use personal protective equipment at all times on your medical trip for your personal health and safety.**

**We encourage you to make decisions about immunizations in conjunction with your primary care physician or the Health Department in your community.** You should check the website for the **Center for Disease Control** (CDC) for common diseases in the countries to be visited, and the required/recommended immunization information. <http://www.cdc.gov/>. Generally, you should start your immunizations at least 6 weeks prior to your trip. Please be aware that some countries may require a Certificate of Vaccination. Common required/recommended immunizations include:

Hepatitis A Polio

Hepatitis B Typhoid  
Tetanus Malaria  
Rabies Yellow Fever

**General Tips**

* Bring any medications you need in your carry-on luggage.
* Bring enough medications for your entire trip.
* Leave all medications in their original, labeled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions and know the generic names for all your medications.
* If you wear glasses or contacts, bring an extra pair in your carry-on luggage.
* **Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Use hand sanitizer.** You may want to carry antibiotic-containing moist wipes to use daily.
* **Wear Shoes at all times** (not sandals) to prevent skin injuries, animal bites, cuts. Be sure to shake your shoes out in the morning before you put them on to remove spiders, etc. Avoid walking barefoot on damp surfaces, such as bathroom floors/showers
* **Check with your insurance company to determine the level and type of coverage you are entitled to should you become ill overseas. CP2H will not cover the costs of your medical care or evacuation.**
* **CP2H strongly advises all Volunteers to purchase travel and evacuation insurance.**

**Food/Water-Borne Illness**  
The most common illness experienced by travelers overseas are of a gastrointestinal nature, with symptoms of Diarrhea, Nausea, and Vomiting.

**Helpful Tips**:

* Do NOT drink the tap water. Drink only bottled or boiled water.
* Do NOT use tap water to brush your teeth. Use only bottled water.
* At restaurants, always request bottled water.
* Boiled water should be fine, including hot tea and coffee
* Do NOT have drinks with ice.
* Do NOT eat fresh vegetables, salad, unpeeled fruit, uncooked seafood and shellfish
* Food that has been boiled, cooked, or peeled should be fine.
* **Wash your hands thoroughly/use hand sanitizer before eating.**
* You may want to bring medication to treat traveler’s diarrhea – **please discuss with your primary care physician or Health Department.** Safe fluids and rest are important treatments, and you may want to seek help from another provider if your condition persists.

**Dehydration, Heat Exhaustion, and Heat Stroke**

Your team may be exposed to high temperatures and long work days. It is critical that you drink plenty of water throughout the course of the day. In the US, an adult needs 2-3 liters of fluid per day. In the tropics, this increases to 3-4 liters per day. Coffee, tea and beer do not count as fluids because they dehydrate.

**Helpful Tips**:

* Drink plenty of safe water.
* You may want to bring individual flavor packs (eg-Crystal Light) to add to water
* Dehydration is often accompanied by sodium deficiency. This can lead to fatigue, cramps, headaches, and confusion. Adding salt to your food and snacking on salty foods such as crackers or jerky may minimize risk.

**Dehydration**:   
Symptoms: Dry mouth; no tears; muscle cramps; nausea; vomiting; light headedness; weakness, decreased urine output.   
Treatment: Rehydrate with safe water, sports drink

**Heat Exhaustion**:   
Symptoms: Profuse sweating; weakness; nausea; vomiting; headache; light headedness; muscle cramps.   
Treatment: move out of the hot environment; rehydrate with safe water or sports drink; cover with a wet sheet. If vomiting prevents intake of liquids, intravenous fluids may be required.

**Heat Stroke:** **Heat Stroke is a medical emergency and can be fatal if not promptly and properly treated.**   
Symptoms include: high body temperature; no longer sweating; hot, red, or flushed dry skin; rapid pulse; difficulty breathing, agitation; disorientation; seizure; and/or coma.

Treatment: Move to a shady area; remove clothing; apply cool water to skin; fan victim to promote sweating and evaporation; place ice packs under armpits and groan. If able, have them drink cool safe water or sports drink. Get victim to hospital as soon as possible.

**Malaria**  
Malaria is a global health risk and the problem is on the rise due to increased travel, the deterioration of the malaria situation in many parts of the world, and the increase in drug resistance. Malaria transmission occurs in large areas of Central America and South America, sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian Subcontinent, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Oceania. The estimated risk of acquiring malaria varies markedly from one area to another.

More information as to specific malaria drug requirements can be obtained from the Center for Disease Control. <http://www.cdc.gov/> All travelers to malarias areas of the world are advised to use an appropriate drug regimen and personal protection measures to prevent malaria.

Be aware that it is still possible, despite these efforts, to contract malaria. It is important to understand that malaria can be treated effectively early in the course of the disease but that delaying appropriate therapy can have serious and even fatal consequences. Individuals who have symptoms of malaria should seek prompt medical evaluation as soon as possible.

**Helpful Tips**:

* Volunteers should take the necessary prophylactic drugs before, during and after the trip as protection against malaria, as determined by you and your physician.
* Due to the nocturnal feeding habits of mosquitoes, malaria transmission occurs primarily between dusk and dawn. Take measures to reduce contact with mosquitoes during these hours. This includes remaining in well screened areas, using mosquito nets, and wearing clothes that cover most of the body.
* Purchase insect repellant prior to travel for use on exposed skin. It is generally advised to put on Sunscreen first, then spray DEET over the sunscreen. The most effective repellant contains **DEET**, an ingredient in many commercially available insect repellents . The actual concentration varies among repellents: the high the concentration, the longer lasting the repellent activity. The CDC recommends 25-30% DEET. Please note that the higher concentrations may last longer but may lead to more systemic absorption and melting of watch crystals, glasses, etc. Also, you may want to consider using clothing treated with permethrin, available at stores such as REI.

**Other Diseases**  
Dengue Fever is a major threat in some of the countries visited by CP2H. Please see the CDC website for more information. <http://www.cdc.gov/>

In Haiti, mosquito borne Filariasis may be a threat. Volunteers may want to consider being treated with a dose of anti-work medicine at the end of their stay.

**Jet Lag**  
“Jet lag” is the process the body undergoes as it adjusts to changes in time, light, climate and temperature. Jet lag is a result of disruption of the body’s biological clock (sensitive to sleep cycles and body temperature). Symptoms include: irritability; confusion; disorientation; and altered sleep-wake cycles.

**Helpful Tips**:

* Get plenty of exercise several days before departure.
* Get plenty of rest the night before your departure.
* During your flight, drink lots of fluids (avoid carbonation and caffeine)
* Dress in loose clothing on the flight to maximize circulation.
* Stretch and walk about the cabin frequently during flight. Do ankle “pumps” in your seat hourly
* When you near your destination, sponge off and change clothes. Brush your teeth.
* On arrival, expose yourself to daylight if possible to help your body adjust.
* Try to adapt meals and sleep patterns to the new time zone the first day.
* Consult your primary care physician prior to departure to see if a sleep aid may help you if you have difficulty sleeping in the new time zone.

1. **Travel and Trip Logistics**

**Passport**You must have a valid passport that **expires no sooner than 6 months after your return date.**

**Visa**

**I**t is the Volunteer’s responsibility to determine if a Visa is needed for your trip. Generally, a tourist visa is appropriate. Check with your Medical Team Leader before applying for your visa as the travel agent is often able to apply for visas as a group.

**Travel and Evacuation Insurance**CP2H strongly advises you to obtain travel and evacuation insurance. In some cases, the Team Leader may **require** Volunteers to obtain evacuation. Your travel agent may be able to assist you with insurance. Here are some options you may want to look into:

* MedAssist
* Access America

**Travel Arrangements**

Please note that Volunteers pay for their own airfare, food, lodging and insurance. Ensure you have received the exact **overseas arrival date/time** from your Team Leader.

Your Team Leader may require that you use a specific travel agent to ensure that CP2H can effectively track and support our Medical Teams Abroad. Otherwise, you may make your own travel arrangements – it is imperative that you advise your Team Leader/Logistics Coordinator of your travel dates and flight information.

Generally, in-country accommodations will be arranged by the Team Leader/Logistics Coordinator; and Volunteers pay for their accommodations and will be advised how to provide payment.  
  
**Itinerary**

CP2H will provide you with an itinerary prior to your trip. We also provide the name of the Foreign Contact, Accommodations, and US Embassy name/phone numbers in case of an emergency. You should leave this information with your office staff, your family, and your physician before you leave. CP2H registers the entire team with the State Department in Washington DC and US Embassy in the Host country.

**Packing List**

**Helpful Tips**:

* Pack light. You will likely have to carry what you pack
* Most teams require Volunteers to pack medical supplies/equipment
* We prepare customs list for medical supplies/equipment
* Be prepared to complete customs forms upon entry in host country
* Avoid bringing expensive personal items- leave jewelry at home – it can attract “snatching” in public, resulting in torn ear lobes, etc.
* Always carry information on your person that would be helpful in an emergency when alone(eg- getting hit by a motorcycle crossing the street to meet someone at a cafe)- this would include- copy of your passport, contact info (both at home and in host country, hotel business card, etc.)

Sample Packing List

* Passport (original and two photocopies)
* Credit/Debit card(s) - be sure to notify your bank of overseas travel dates
* Airline tickets (bring copy)
* Pens/pencils/sharpie pen
* Photos of your family, city, country (to show hosts and new colleagues)
* Camera, film, batteries
* Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss
* Toilet paper (travel size)
* Razor/shaving cream
* Feminine hygiene items
* Shampoo/conditioner
* Comb/brush
* Contact lenses/glasses (extra pair in case of loss)
* Deodorant
* Hand sanitizer or towelette packs
* Soap
* Ear plugs
* Swiss army knife- leave this is your checked luggage- it will be confiscated if carried onto planes
* Scrubs
* Medical kit as needed: headlight or penlight (extra batteries), gloves, otoscope, thermometer, stethoscope, tape, 4x4s, scissors)
* Medical resources: Pocket PDR or medication guide, software apps medical references, CDC guidelines
* Laptop computer – caution- safety is at your own risk
* Sunscreen
* Insect repellant with DEET - - it may not be possible to purchase this overseas
* Hat or visor
* Sunglasses
* Flip flops or sandals for shower
* Shoes – 2 pair (closed toe/good soles recommended)
* One casual/dress up clothes for dinner out
* Swimsuit (if hotel stay)
* Spending money for souvenirs
* Personal medications (vitamins, supplements, Rx drugs – all labeled)
* Anti-malarial medications if needed
* Antihistamine, anti-diarrhea med, topical hydrocortisone
* Extra snacks (power bars, crystal light flavor packets for water, snacks)
* Reusable Water Bottle
* Cell phone with international plan (Warning- check fees prior to using)
* Electrical Adapter or plug for host country

**Communications**Please consult with your Team Leader regarding the availability of communications in country. If you plan to use your cell phone in country, you are advised to contact your cell phone provider in advance of your trip to determine availability. In developing countries, it is not unusual for internet access to be sporadic.

**Electricity**

Electricity varies from country to country. Please determine the voltage needs of the country you are visiting and ensure that you have an appropriate adapter and perhaps a transformer. In developing countries, it is not unusual for electricity to be sporadic.

**Currency**

Please contact your bank regarding foreign currency. If you plan to use your debit or credit card in country, you are advised to contact your card provider in advance of your trip to determine availability. Please note that debit and/or credit cards may be of limited use in some countries.

1. **Safety Tips While Volunteering Abroad**

Childs Passport to Health regularly monitors security in our team locations and will pass on any relevant information to our volunteers. CP2H also registers the entire team with the State Department in Washington DC and the US Embassy in the Host country.

Volunteers are encouraged to visit the US State Department website for travel information. <http://www.state.gov/travel/>

Here are a few basic guidelines that may greatly reduce the risk of security and safety issues:

* **Be Aware of your surroundings:** Stay vigilant and aware of your environment. It can be easy to stop paying attention when you’re part of a large group. Keep your eyes and ears open. Locals, especially staff from the host organization, are most familiar with their community’s security situation – consider their recommendations.
* **Avoid Being Alone:** Stay with at least one other team member, and let your Team Leader know if you intend to leave the group at any time.
* **Take extra precautions after dark:** After dark, go only to familiar locations and with a group, preferably in the company of staff from the host organization.
* **Keep a low profile:** Leave your valuables at home; take only items that are necessary and keep them out of sight. Dress simply - out of respect for the local culture and to stay safe, watch what the locals are wearing and dress appropriately.
* **Traffic: Use extreme caution crossing streets and walking near roads.** Traffic accidents occur more frequently in developing nations, where roads are often unmaintained, traffic rules less enforced, and roads shared with vehicles of all types, animals and people.
* **Threatening Demands:** If someone demands something (money, camera, etc) in a threatening manner, give it to them without a fight. Often attackers are after material goods and won’t hurt anyone if they get something of value.
* **Passport and Money:** Always carry a copy your passport. Keep your passport and large sums of money in a money belt under your clothes or, even better, in a locked location (like a safe) provided by your host organization.
* **Contact Info:** Always carry information on your person that would be helpful in an emergency when alone(eg- getting hit by a motorcycle crossing the street to meet someone at a cafe)- this would include- copy of your passport, contact info (both at home and in host country, hotel business card, etc.)
* **Legal and Cultural Rules**: Obey the laws and respect the cultural traditions of the Host country. You are subject to the laws of each country you visit.

1. **Cultural Tips for Volunteering Abroad**

* As an American or other national going abroad to work, you should be aware that many attitudes, customs, and beliefs that we see as positive may not be viewed the same in other countries. **Being a volunteer means that one must be aware of these cultural differences and be able to work effectively in an atmosphere of differing expectations and values**. Volunteers, unlike tourists who can remain relatively isolated from the culture and the people, must work closely with the local people.
* As L. Robert Kohns stated in his excellent book, *Survival Kits for Overseas Living,* **“the point is that what we think are positive values or admirable characteristics may not be considered so by others. What we believe is a positive stereotype may be a negative one in the eyes of a person from another country. Which brings us to the fundamental point: throughout the world there are different ways of doing things, most of which are intrinsically neither better nor worse than our own. THEY ARE SIMPLY DIFFERENT.”**
* **Volunteerism in some foreign countries is a non-existent concept**. In fact, some languages do not have a word for Volunteer. Volunteers are often perceived to have ulterior motives, such as practicing experimental medicine or gathering intelligence for some US government organizations.
* **Volunteers must realize that they will not be able to change the world overnight**. Be careful not to raise the hopes and expectations of the local people. Do not make promises that cannot be kept by either you or the organization. Show that you are part of a team effort which will continue to work side by side with local counterparts. Remember that you are a short-term visitor and an “Ambassador of Goodwill” for Healing the Children. People in these countries see us as an organization, not as individual health workers.
* What skills and attitudes will help you the most? According to the *Survival Kit for Overseas Living* the list includes: **tolerance for ambiguity, low goal/task orientation, open mindedness, empathy, flexibility, sense of humor, curiosity, communicativeness, warmth in human relations, motivation, self-reliance, tolerance for differences, perceptiveness, and the ability to fail.**
* Most specialists in developing countries, in addition to working part-time for the government, also have their own private practice in the afternoon and evening. Even though there may be an obvious need for specialists, competition for paying patrons can be fierce. This situation may lead to opposition and hostility on the part of some local health professionals when the Healing the Children health team arrives at a particular hospital to work.
* You as a Healing the Children volunteer may feel frustrated by local physicians or health professionals coming late to the hospital or leaving early. Remember that these people face many frustrations daily, such as low wages and long hours, lack of supplies, etc. and person and financial sacrifice by remaining in their home country. They should be supported and praised, since they will be remaining to provide care long after the volunteers have returned home.
* Volunteers may also be resented by surgeons and other specialists, as they take away precious operating room and time and demand the time and support of the hospital personnel.
* **Volunteers should make every effort to make as few demands as possible on their hosts.** Healing the Children’s policy is to always provide all the specialists necessary from stateside personnel to enable us to do our work. Please try to avoid making new expectations and promises that Healing the Children cannot keep. Instead try working within the framework of the program goals and understand that changes will come only with time.
* In summary, start on your trip with a sensitivity and curiosity to learn from everything you see. **Listen, look and enjoy the differences in cultures.** Never be afraid to ask questions nor answer them. **Remember, the more empathy and respect that you show for the culture and problems of your hosts, the more effective you will be.**

1. **Returning Home**

Many volunteers returning home from a medical trip might find themselves struggling with guilt or sadness over the impoverished conditions they may have seen. We encourage to share your experiences with your friends and colleagues.

Also, you may want to have further discussion with your team members about your experiences.

Most people in the U.S. have not traveled in impoverished countries and may not understand or appreciate the level of concern felt by the returned volunteer. One of the best ways to educate people is to share pictures and memories and talk about Childs Passport to Health and its goals.

**Our Mission**: Healing the Children restores health to impoverished children of the world through donated medical services.

**Our Vision**: Healing the Children envisions a world where every child has access to good medical care.

1. **Thank You!**

Thank you for joining Childs Passport to Health in bringing much-needed medical care throughout the world. The social, political, economic and medical needs of every developing country differ greatly from place to place. As a result, Childs Passport to Health Medical Team Programs Abroad are different from country to country, depending on their specific needs. **However, all programs have a common denominator: Helping people by sharing, caring and offering the skills that we possess to enrich others’ lives.** Thank You on behalf of children and families worldwide.

**RESOURCES**

Passport Info: <http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html>

US State Department: <http://travel.state.gov/>

Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov>

World Time Zones: <http://www.worldtimeserver.com>

Currency Converter: <http://www.xe.com/>

Lonely Planet Guides: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

CIA Country Fact Book: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>