

COSTA RICA IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

Although the Costa Rican government does not require any immunizations for travel in Costa Rica, listed are several immunizations you may wish to consider. These suggestions are based upon U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations and our experiences in traveling to off the "beaten path" and rural areas. While we feel it is better to be safe than sorry, we do not want to cause alarm. We want to emphasize that Costa Rica is considered one of the healthiest Latin American nations. Generally, the worst illness is traveler's diarrhea, but the CDC does recommend several immunizations. As with any medical recommendation, we strongly suggest you consult your personal physician to make the final decision about immunizations.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS:

Hepatitis A

We recommend **active immunization** with Hepatitis A vaccine, such as Havrix, VAQTA or passive immunization with Immune Globulin (IG). The active immunization is preferred, and is usually good for 1 year or more. The CDC states that travelers are considered 'protected' four weeks after receiving the initial vaccine dose. *Immune Globulin* should be given if the vaccine is administered *less than four weeks before travel*. This is important, for we will be traveling in rural areas, and we cannot control *all* aspects of food preparation. **PLEASE DO NOT DELAY.** For more information check out the CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/a/faq.htm>

Typhoid

The chance of exposure to Typhoid is very remote in the areas where we travel. However, to be on the safe side, the CDC does recommend vaccination. Although there are several choices of vaccines, one recommended by the CDC is ViCPS (Typhim Vi, Pasteur Merieux). **This injection requires only one week to be effective.** There is little harm in this extra precaution, even though we do not travel in areas with a history of Typhoid. **For more information check out the CDC website:** <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/typhoid.htm>

General Vaccinations

All routine vaccines (such as DTP or Td, Hib, MMR, polio, varicella, influenza and pneumococcal) should be kept up-to-date as a matter of good health practice.

General Health Concerns

Malaria

Malaria is a serious disease transmitted to humans by the bite of a mosquito. Although the CDC warns of the risk of malaria in certain provinces of Costa Rica, Global Works takes special care **NOT to travel to areas in Costa Rica that have reported cases of malaria.** While we do not recommend anti-malarial drugs such as Chloroquine, it is up to each individual family.

Dengue Fever

Dengue is a mosquito transmitted viral disease occurring in tropical and subtropical areas of the world, primarily in poor urban areas. The illness is flu-like and characterized by sudden onset, high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain and rash. In Costa Rica, the risk of contracting dengue fever is limited--especially since **we stay away from areas with a history of Dengue.** Unfortunately, there is no vaccine for Dengue Fever; the preventative measure is to reduce exposure to dengue carrying mosquitoes. We will use mosquito nets when necessary, wear clothes that cover most of our body (especially at dawn and dusk), and wear insect repellent. Although DEET is the most effective ingredient in insect repellents, a concentration of greater than 35% is discouraged and is found to be ineffective.

Gastro - Intestinal Problems

We will pay close attention to our choice of food and beverages. However, when and if you suffer from diarrhea, oral re-hydration is essential along with two other interventions we have found to be very effective. We would like each participant to bring a supply of **Pepto Bismol caplets (not tablets).** This treats the **symptoms** of intestinal illness caused by bacteria. Another option is one full **adult prescription of Bactrim** for the treatment of the **causes.** Bactrim is

a popular, wide-spectrum anti-biotic which works quickly to eliminate the unwelcome bacteria. Again, this is your choice.