Studying Abroad?

Your Health and Wellness Abroad

SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENTS

Whether you are generally healthy, have significant medical needs, or fall somewhere in between, planning ahead will help you have a successful and healthy study abroad experience.

Developed by Colby Off-Campus Study, Counseling Services, and the Heath Center

Resources For All Study Abroad Students

- Review the OCS’s and your program’s pre-departure information carefully as it contains lots of helpful information to help you prepare and tips for staying healthy while on site.
- Don’t hesitate to reach out to your program’s resident staff in the event you need medical care while abroad.
- Research health conditions at your destination:
  - Centers for Disease Control (CDC) – Travelers’s Health [http://www.cdc.gov/travel/]
  - MD Travel Health.com [http://www.mdtravelhealth.com/]
  - Safety Abroad First Educational Travel Information [http://www.globaled.us/safety/]
  - Center for Global Education Study Abroad Student Handbook [http://www.studentsabroad.com/]

If you have concerns or questions, don’t hesitate to reach out to any of us. We are delighted about your interest in studying abroad while at Colby and want to support you in having a successful and enriching experience.

CONTACT:
Health Center
(207) 859-4460, Garrison-Foster, 2nd floor

Counseling Services
(207) 859-4490, Garrison Foster 205

Your Doctor or Counselor at home

Off-Campus Study
Eustis 103 offcamp@colby.edu

Dean of Students
207-859-4250 dosoffice@colby.edu

Your off-campus study program

The purpose of this self-assessment is to help you prepare for your time abroad by considering important issues and in consultation with your medical professional, a dean, or the off-campus study office.

The self-assessment is “FOR YOUR EYES ONLY”.

Be proactive, disclose, and plan ahead:

1. Determine if study abroad is right for you
2. Take these issues into account as you decide whether, when or where to study abroad.
3. Discuss your plans with medical professionals, off-campus study, deans, or faculty to choose the best study abroad program and location for you.
4. Prepare in advance for what you need to stay healthy.
5. Talk to your health professional about resources and medications supply for the duration of your stay.
6. Plan to bring the documentation you need to provide to your program or university in order to receive academic accommodations.
7. Disclose your health history to your program
8. Determine what services exist abroad
9. Put a plan in place to access the resources or treatments you need while abroad.
10. Inform others on site about your condition so that they can be able to help if needed.
11. Communicate your needs to those around you.
Study Abroad And Your Health

If you answered YES to any of the Health Self-Assessment questions, we urge you to think about how these issues or conditions might impact you while abroad and to discuss your off-campus study plans and ways to manage your conditions while abroad with your health care professional(s). Additionally, the Off-Campus Study office at Colby can help you select the right program based on your needs, assist you in your planning, and find out what resources will be available for you on site.

The same things that make studying abroad exciting (new foods, customs, climate, people, etc.) can also present challenges. Many students will adjust very readily with little or no difficulty, while others may experience a range of physical and/or emotional challenges.

The stresses that often accompany studying abroad may exacerbate ongoing physical or mental health conditions, trigger pre-existing ones, or, in some cases, cause new health conditions to emerge. For this reason, it is important to take any pre-existing conditions or special needs into account as you consider whether and where to study abroad.

In order to assure that you receive the advising and preparation you need to have a successful experience while abroad, we strongly encourage you to discuss your study abroad plans and any concerns or special needs openly and honestly with those in a position to best advise you. Your medical professional, a Dean, or the Off-Campus Study office can all help you choose an appropriate program or location and properly prepare you for your time abroad.

It is important to fully disclose your physical or mental health history to your study abroad program, especially if requested.

Please be assured that your privacy regarding the personal information you disclose will be respected and will not be used by Colby or a program to disqualify you from study abroad.

The health information you share is used to help direct your decision-making, properly prepare you for your experience, determine what resources may be available to you in your host country, and make arrangements for any additional support you may need to manage your condition on-site. In some cases, we may assess whether you should consider a program with more readily available support services.

This latter consideration is important as you should not assume that the range of services and accommodations available to you here at Colby will be available while you are abroad. In some parts of the world and on certain types of programs, there may be fewer, or inadequate resources to help you manage a physical or mental health condition.

Similarly, if you currently receive any academic accommodations at Colby, and hope to receive the same while off-campus, you may be required to provide documentation of these accommodations to your program or university. Many study abroad programs or foreign universities can accommodate learning differences and provide special accommodations, but only to the extent that local regulations allow and within the constraints of the program structure and/or host culture.

When it comes to accessing healthcare or special accommodations while abroad, it is important that each student be responsible for recognizing her/his needs and seeking appropriate assistance. While it may be difficult for some students to come forward with their concerns, it is normal to face varying degrees of physical and emotional stress while abroad and seeking support is the wise and sensible thing to do.

“Travel isn’t always pretty. It isn’t always comfortable. Sometimes it hurts, it even breaks your heart. But that’s okay. The journey changes you; it should change you.”
– Anthony Bourdain, No Reservations