

The Samaritan's Purse Travel Health System serves employees, family members, and volunteers who travel internationally on behalf of Samaritan's Purse to provide spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world in Jesus' Name.

Because of the global nature of our work and our large number of international travelers, a comprehensive system managed by the Samaritan's Purse Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and Travel Health staff is needed to provide due care. Due care ranges from providing country-specific recommendations, information regarding infectious disease risks, recommended mitigation measures including vaccinations, health safety recommendations, and support in facilitating appropriate care should a medical incident such as an illness or injury occur during or related to international travel.

What is the purpose of this system?

The purpose of this system is to ensure that all overseas travelers on behalf of the Ministry are well-informed of health risks and measures to mitigate these risks. When travelers report illnesses or sustain injuries during or related to travel, this system will link them to timely medical care.

Why do we need this system?

As Samaritan's Purse continues to serve those in need around the world, we are working in even more challenging places—disaster zones, low resource countries, and areas of increased and changing infectious disease risks, etc. This system will help to maintain the health and well-being of those traveling and working in such contexts.

How do I report my travel to receive pre-trip health information?

Most travel will be reported automatically via the Pre-Travel Authorization (PTA) system for Ministry-related travel. In the event a PTA is not required, your Ministry point of contact will ensure the trip is reported and that you receive pre-trip health information.

Does this apply to domestic (U.S.) Ministry-related travel?

No. The Travel Health System was created to meet the unique needs of people traveling internationally on behalf of Samaritan's Purse.

How do I report a medical incident?

The medical incident should be reported directly to CMO Travel Health by phone, WhatsApp, or Signal at +1-828-616-9393 (available 24/7) or email CMOTravelHealth@samaritan.org.

MEDICAL INCIDENT REPORTING

What is considered a reportable medical incident?

A reportable medical incident is any travel-related injury or illness that occurs during, or is evident after, international travel on behalf of the Ministry. This also would include a medical emergency during travel. Reportable medical instances could include, but are not limited to:

- Symptoms such as fever, flu, cough, shortness of breath, body aches, vomiting, and diarrhea could represent a serious travel-related illness (examples: malaria, dengue fever, typhoid, severe COVID-19, or others noted in the Risk Advisory and Recommendations document you receive prior to travel)
- Injury requiring medical attention, such as an animal bite, broken bone, joint injury/dislocation, or physical trauma

Why should I report travel-related health concerns to an employer?

The purpose of the Travel Health System is to ensure travelers are well-informed and prepared for international travel, to link travelers to medical service options, and to help prevent similar health-related incidents from occurring to others traveling internationally for the Ministry. Reporting a medical incident enables Travel Health staff to help travelers obtain appropriate medical care while on the field and advise on potential next steps as necessary. Travel Health will maintain the confidentiality of the information you share and only ask for information needed to help the traveler obtain the medical care needed.

What if there's a delay or I forget to report a medical incident?

If there is a delay or you forget to report a medical incident, you should still report that an incident has occurred, even if the medical incident resolved satisfactorily. This will enable Travel Health to track patterns of illness and injury in order to identify potential health risks that may impact current or future travelers.

Do I need to report an incident for someone else?

It is preferred that the person with the injury, illness, or health emergency report the medical incident directly to Travel Health. If the person is unable to self-report the medical incident, a travel companion, field colleague, or the employee's direct supervisor is encouraged to report the incident as soon as possible to Travel Health staff so they can help the traveler obtain appropriate and timely medical care. Only share information pertinent to the incident and communicate directly with Travel Health.

Do I need their permission to report a medical incident involving them?

No. If you believe that a reportable incident has occurred, you do not need the person's consent since international travelers are informed of Travel Health procedures through the Travel Health Notice acknowledgment and consent process.

If I am on personal travel, do I report a medical incident?

You do not report a medical incident to Travel Health if you are on personal travel. Only a medical incident while traveling internationally for Samaritan's Purse would necessitate reporting as part of Travel Health.

What if my spouse or a family member who is traveling with me has a medical incident?

All adult travelers will be enrolled in the Travel Health System prior to their international travel. This includes non-employees, such as spouses, other family members, and volunteers. Adult travelers should report their own medical incidents, if possible. In the case of family members traveling, a minor's adult parent or guardian should report a medical incident on behalf of the minor.

What happens after I report an incident?

Travel Health staff will link the traveler to medical care, if needed, helping the traveler to obtain appropriate assistance in a timely manner.

Do I have to follow the recommendations of Travel Health staff?

The traveler can choose whether to utilize the linkage to medical care that the Travel Health staff can facilitate. The Travel Health System is a resource to provide the best possible individualized assistance on a case-by-case basis regardless of the traveler's international location.

DATA MANAGEMENT

What data will be collected?

The Travel Health System collects and processes personal data consistent with the Samaritan's Purse Privacy Notice at samaritanpurse.org/our-ministry/privacy-policy. This includes basic demographic information that for employees is already in PeopleSoft and that volunteers are required to provide on their application. If an employee's job does not require international travel, the information will be kept as inactive. Only people identified as international travelers will have an active record. For those with an active record, the only additional information collected will be an annual vaccination attestation concerning vaccinations considered to be *highly recommended* for international travel, with an option to provide status information on *advisable* vaccinations.

How secure is my data?

Data will be housed on the internal Samaritan's Purse platform called the Ark. Access will be securely controlled to ensure that data privacy is strictly maintained.

Who will have access to my data?

Your point of contact will have access to general information related to travel and facilitate the completion of annual vaccination attestations. Points of contact will be trained to manage this general information. Only Travel Health staff will have access to specific information, such as your vaccination status and reported incidents.

Will my information be shared?

Reports that are generated for the management of the system, including reports for senior leadership, will not contain any personal identifying information of the travelers. Information will only be shared based on a work-related, need-to-know basis. In the event of an extreme medical emergency, senior leadership will be notified.

Does this process violate my medical privacy?

No. The Travel Health System is not a medical record and protected health information is not being stored.

CONSENT

May I opt out? What if I decline to acknowledge or give consent to this system?

All international travelers will be asked to acknowledge (for employees) or acknowledge and consent (for non-employees) to the Travel Health System. If an employee chooses not to acknowledge the system, the employee's ability to travel overseas for the Ministry will be evaluated and determined by the department's vice president, as well as the Ministry's CMO and chief operating officer (COO). If a non-employee declines to provide acknowledgment and consent for the Travel Health System, the family member or volunteer will not be permitted to travel internationally for the Ministry.

What is the annual vaccination attestation?

All travelers (employees and non-employees) will be asked to provide an annual vaccination attestation noting their vaccination status for vaccines that have been determined as *highly recommended* for international travel. They will have the option to note vaccinations deemed *advisable*. This will help Travel Health staff facilitate access to appropriate medical treatment in an emergency.

VACCINATION

Why do I need to have a certain vaccination?

Based on research on infectious disease threats that can cause illness and death, Samaritan's Purse has developed lists of vaccinations that are *highly recommended* and those that are *advisable* for persons traveling on behalf of the Ministry. These lists, while not comprehensive, are based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization recommendations, as well as recognized best practices. Additional vaccinations may be required by destination countries for entry or exit.

What if I have a medical exemption or other accommodation for one or more of the listed vaccinations?

Samaritan's Purse does not mandate any vaccination or medication. Therefore, exemptions are not necessary.

What if I prefer not to be vaccinated?

It is suggested that you discuss any vaccine concerns with your healthcare provider. While all vaccinations carry some risk of side effects, the short-term and long-term health risks associated with vaccine preventable diseases are much greater than any risk associated with vaccination. If you are not current on all highly recommended vaccinations, your international travel on behalf of the Ministry will be evaluated per location on a case-by-case basis to ensure that you, and those you are serving, are not placed in undue harm.

I am in good health, why do I need these vaccines? My body can fight infection on its own.

Vaccines help the immune system learn to defend itself from disease without the dangers of a full-blown infection. The immune response to a vaccine might cause fatigue and discomfort for a few days. It is important to be aware that vaccine preventable diseases can cause death and severe long-term health consequences in very healthy individuals. Unfortunately, good health does not protect from the consequences of many infections.

Why should I have to take these precautions if I do not feel it is necessary?

Vaccinations have been shown to protect against devastating and deadly diseases. Additionally, vaccines can protect against the harm of spreading certain illnesses among the people we serve.

Do I need a vaccine if the disease is less prevalent globally?

There is a resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases globally—even some diseases (such as measles, polio, and diphtheria) that have been declared “extinct” in some countries. Despite a disease being greatly diminished globally, the residents of an area could have low or no vaccination coverage. An unvaccinated person can easily bring a disease into an at-risk population and cause great harm.

Do combination vaccinations overload the immune system?

No, vaccines only use a small part of the immune system for a short period of time while the body builds immunity to the disease. Even when vaccines are given in combination, the immune system is not overwhelmed.

Are fetal cells used in vaccine development?

Cell lines from aborted fetal tissue collected over 40 years ago may be used in the design, development, and testing of some vaccines, but no newly collected aborted fetal tissue is used in development of any vaccine. Specifically, mRNA vaccines are not manufactured (design and development) using fetal cell lines but do use fetal cell lines for testing. Today there are many alternative vaccines that have been developed without the use of aborted fetal cells or tissue. No final vaccine contains fetal cells or tissue.

Is COVID-19 vaccination required?

Some countries require either COVID-19 vaccination or a negative test prior to arrival. While it is an *advisable* vaccine, it is not considered a *highly recommended* vaccine unless specified by the destination country.

For additional information, please contact the Chief Medical Office on-call staff:
+1 828-616-9393 (available 24/7) | CMOTravelHealth@samaritan.org