Health Alert for University Students & Staff Traveling Abroad

Last Updated: July 7, 2003

At present no Travel Advisories are in effect. The CDC downgraded the Travel Advisory for Beijing China and Taiwan to a Travel Alert effective 6-25-03. The CDC has a Travel Alert in effect for Beijing, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Toronto Canada. Travelers to these areas are encouraged to observe certain health precautions to protect themselves from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The Travel Alert for mainland China (excluding Beijing) has been lifted effective 7-03-03. **To protect your health, please follow these guidelines:**

BEFORE you travel:

- Be able to recognize the symptoms of SARS: a fever over 100.4°F (38°C) a dry cough, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing.
- Assemble a health kit with basic first aid supplies including a thermometer, household disinfectant, alcohol-based hand rub, and a supply of surgical masks and gloves.
- Visit UF's Travel Clinic (at the Student Health Care Center) to make sure your travel immunizations are up-to-date and to learn any health recommendations pertinent to your itinerary. (392-1161 Ext. 1-4259)
- Check your health insurance policy to make sure it covers medical evacuation. Have an in-country plan for medical care if you become ill or get injured.

WHILE traveling:

- Wash your hands **often** with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rubs.
- Avoid close contact with large numbers of people.
- Stay well hydrated and get adequate rest to keep your immune system working optimally.
- Avoid sharing eating utensils and drinking after others.

IF you THINK you have SARS or SARS like symptoms while traveling:

- **Seek medical care by first calling ahead to alert the health care provider that you may have SARS.** This approach offers the best protection for other patients and staff in the doctor's office and safeguards against unnecessary transmission of the disease.
- Wear a surgical mask to prevent spread of potentially infectious droplets.
- Have persons who are close to you wear a mask to protect themselves.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue if coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often, lathering with soap for 15-20 seconds followed by a thorough rinsing.
- Clean environmental surfaces (sinks, toilets) that were (or could be) potentially soiled by body fluids of someone suspected of having SARS with a household disinfectant following product directions.
- Wear gloves when disinfecting and then discard. *Never* wash and reuse gloves. *Always* wash hands thoroughly even after using gloves.
- Persons traveling from areas with SARS with fever or respiratory symptoms or exposure to SARS patients within 10 days prior to scheduled departure **should NOT travel** and should seek medical evaluation.

UPON your return to UF:

- **Call the Student Health Care Center Administration at 392-1161 ext 1-4217 immediately** upon your return for up-to-date health counseling regarding SARS.
- If you have been traveling in an area with SARS cases, monitor yourself and any family members for fever and/or respiratory symptoms for a full 10 days upon your return.
- Should fever > 100.4°F (38°C) and/or respiratory symptoms develop, call the SHCC at 392-1161 ext. 1-4217 to discuss your medical condition or contact your medical provider.
- **Call ahead if you need to see a health care provider** and alert the staff that you are experiencing SARS-like symptoms. This will safeguard other patients and staff against unnecessary transmission of disease.

STAY informed by frequently visiting these health web sites:

- ***Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* – http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/**
- ***World Health Organization* – http://www.who.int/**
- ***UF Student Health Care Center* – http://www.health.ufl.edu/shcc/**