

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following will answer most common questions people have about participating in a Medical Mission Team through CHHF.

If you are a team member and your question is not answered here, send the question to your Team Leader. Persons not on a team may contact Peggy Hook at hookkp@gmail.com. She will provide an answer to your question and, if appropriate, post it on the web site for others to see.

To automatically scroll to the answer for the question, press on the question at the same time.

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General Questions

When do teams go to the clinic?

Volunteer teams staff the clinic every other week from February through October of each year. Medical personnel offer medical care in the CHHF clinics in Limón and Icoteas. Some teams provide medical care in schools or churches in other remote villages. A few teams have begun to staff the Whispering Hope Clinic in Chapagua near Trujillo which is the only clinic to receive teams year-round.

What type of medical personnel are needed?

Every team must have at least one licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. In addition, teams need nurses, dentists, dental technicians, EMTs, a pharmacist, and a lab tech.

What can I do if I am not medically trained?

Although medical personnel are needed, other non-medical personnel can also assist. Many work as assistants to the pharmacist; some help the nurses take blood pressure or weigh patients; others evaluate patients for reading glasses. If fluent in Spanish, then volunteering as an interpreter is rewarding. Often there are volunteers interested in construction projects; they can assist with maintenance projects at the clinic or can work on other projects in the community.

Do I need to speak Spanish?

Having the ability to speak the local language is beneficial but not necessary. Interpreters are hired as needed to work with team members. Some on the staff in Limón speak English.

What is the weather like in Honduras?

Honduras has a temperate tropical climate and the weather varies by month just as it does here except that it is never cold. As noted on the chart below the area around Limón on the Caribbean Coast will experience daytime highs in the upper 70's F to the mid 80's F throughout most of the year. During much of the year, the temperature at times may reach the high 90's F. Low temperatures are generally in the low 70's° F; however, the temperatures may drop to the mid 60's. The rainy season (November – January) is slightly cooler; teams do not travel to Limón during this season.

LIMON, COLON, HONDURAS WEATHER							
MONTH	Temperature °F					Average Rainfall (in)	
	Average			Absolute		Daily	Monthly
	max	avg	min	max	min		
Jan	74.7	70.5	67.1	90.3	69.8	0.06	1.9
Feb	75.4	71.5	68.2	97.7	66.2	0.05	1.5
Mar	75.9	71.5	68.9	99.0	68.0	0.02	0.7
Apr	77.5	73.0	69.8	98.6	59.0	0.01	0.5
May	80.6	76.0	72.5	97.2	72.0	0.01	0.5
Jun	80.4	76.5	73.0	96.3	71.6	0.02	0.5
Jul	82.9	77.5	73.9	96.8	59.0	0.11	2.9
Aug	77.7	73.5	70.7	96.8	65.1	0.05	1.7
Sept	86.2	81.0	76.8	99.9	70.2	0.06	2.0
Oct	80.6	76.0	72.7	96.5	68.7	0.09	2.7
Nov	76.1	72.5	69.4	93.2	61.5	0.12	3.5
Dec	70.0	67.0	64.0	91.0	68.4	0.11	3.3

Source: MeoWeather 2012

Can my children go with me?

Recognizing that our primary purpose is medical mission, CHHF welcomes the participation of family groups. Teenage children should be involved in the clinic operations or on other mission efforts during the working day. Ultimately, this is a decision for your team leader; you should discuss this in advance.

How do I join a team?

The best way is to contact a team leader listed on the team schedule to determine whether that team has space. Alternatively, you may contact Peggy Hook hookkp@gmail.com and advise her of your interest in going with one of the CHHF teams. She will let team leaders know of your interest. Either way, be sure to explain your skills which would be beneficial to the team in Honduras.

How can I arrange to take my own team?

Frequently there are time slots in the yearly schedule which do not have a committed team. If a slot is available and you are interested in arranging to lead a team, contact hookkp@gmail.com

Living Accommodations

Describe the living accommodations.

Living accommodations are located upstairs in the clinic building. A family room, kitchen and a large veranda overlooking the ocean are the center of activities. There are eight bedrooms with two or three beds in each room, sleeping space for 20 people one per bed. Each two rooms share a bath. Each bedroom has a ceiling fan; floor fans are also available. Although the living area is not air conditioned, there are usually ocean breezes. The veranda overlooks the Caribbean Sea. Room assignments are made by your team leader.

What type of electrical power is available?

All of Honduras uses 110 volt electrical power just as we have in the United States. Electrical plugs are also two-prong like here, but many outlets do not have the third ground prong. If you have electrical equipment that needs a third ground prong, take an adapter with you.

Travel Questions

Do I need a Passport or Visa?

You will need a passport to travel to Honduras; for US Citizens a Visa is not required. Make sure your passport is valid for at least six (6) months beyond your intended stay in Honduras and has sufficient space for entry and exit stamps within the passport.

If you do not have a passport, the process can take six weeks or more. If you are foreign born, or have a foreign passport, check on the requirements for entry into and return from Honduras well in advance of travel. The time required to obtain necessary documents can be 60 days or more. Before you leave the US, ensure that you have the proper documents.

Make two copies of your passport to assist you in the event it becomes lost or stolen. Keep one copy separate from the passport in a safe location. Leave the second copy with someone in the US whom you can contact in the event of an emergency. If your Team Leader requests a copy, you will need a third copy.

Important: The name on your airline ticket must match exactly the name as it appears on your passport.

What immunizations and medications do I need to travel to Honduras?

Please contact your physician concerning individual needs, the medications to be taken, and their side effects. Generally, it is recommended that each person have the following immunizations and medications:

- **Hepatitis A (2 shots)**
- **Hepatitis B (3 shots)**
- **Typhoid (1 shot, boosters periodically)**
- **Tetanus (1 shot, boosters periodically)**
- **Malaria Medication** - the quantity varies depending upon the length of stay. Every person should take 500mg of Aralen or Chloroquine Phosphate as specified below:
 - 1 week before entering Honduras take your first tablet
 - If you are in Honduras 1-7 days take one tablet each week on the same day as your first dose
 - If you are in Honduras more than 7 days, you will need to repeat your medicine on the same day each week while in the country
 - After leaving Honduras you should take this medication for 4 more weeks

In summary, a stay of 7 days in Honduras will require a total of six (6) 500mg tablets while a stay of 10 days will require a total of seven (7) 500 mg tablets. This medication should be taken with a full meal.

What airline should I take?

Your travel plans should be closely coordinated with the Team Leader and in some cases teams purchase group tickets. Generally, teams fly into San Pedro Sula and schedule arrivals near the same time of day. Most teams travel via American Airlines, United Airlines, or Delta Airlines. Always check fares from several nearby airports as sometimes it pays to drive to another airport to find a more reasonable fare.

Important: The name on your ticket must match exactly the name as it appears on your passport.

What should I bring with me?

Airline rules have changed with regard to carry-on and checked luggage. Before travel, check the latest rules with your airline. Generally team members are asked to take clothing and personal items as carry-on luggage so that checked baggage can be utilized to transport the medicines and other supplies the team will need. Minimal personal clothing is needed as there is daily laundry service at the clinic.

Place any personal medications (enough to cover a longer stay than planned in case of delay on your return home) and any personal medical equipment needed such as CPAP in a carry-on. Medical staff should take stethoscopes, otoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, etc.

Honduras is a tropical climate; plan to dress accordingly. The clinic is on front beach; many team members appreciate having a swim suit.

Expense Questions

How much will the trip cost?

There are many elements which determine trip costs. The major variable is the airline ticket cost. Fixed costs include vehicle rental and fuel for transportation in Honduras, medicines and medical supplies needed at the clinics, travel insurance, and payment for employees working for the team while in Honduras. Since team members share these costs, a larger team will result in lower costs per person. Sometimes Teams find sponsors to subsidize a portion of these costs. Your Team Leader will develop a budget and advise each person of his/her share of the costs. Generally speaking, individual expenses can be expected to be approximately \$1,500.

Why do I have to pay an Exit Fee to leave Honduras?

When leaving the country, there is an Airport exit fee for persons who have traveled within Honduras. This fee is used to both improve airport facilities and to build new airports in Honduras. The fees must be paid in US Dollars (Cash Only) or in Honduran Lempira (Cash Only). Credit cards are accepted, but will be processed as a cash advance costing you additional money. The 2014 Exit Fee to return to the States is \$38. You will only need to pay this fee as you exit the Country.

If you take an additional flight within the Country there are lesser airport fees required.

Safety Questions

Is Honduras safe?

Issues of safety in Honduras and other Latin American countries have frequently been covered in the media. The problems in Honduras do not appear to be greater than in some of our cities. Like cities in the US, there are many places one should not frequent. CHHF has taken action to ensure the safety of our teams. Each team travels with a Honduran facilitator; teams are instructed as to where and when to travel. CHHF has also been in discussions with the Commissioner of Police for the area of Honduras which includes the area around Limón where our clinic is located. The Commissioner has assured us the full support of the police for our work.

Are the food and water safe?

When eating food or drinking water on the local economy, you should be cautious. Generally, the food and water in the restaurants our teams frequent are safe, but one should avoid drinking tap water or having ice in drinks outside of these major establishments. Always be cautious with eating onions, lettuce, or tomatoes at fast-food establishments. If eating non-peeled fruit, make sure it has been washed before being peeled and consumed.

While at the clinic, most teams hire local cooks trained in food preparation for safe consumption. Thus, volunteers do not worry about the food prepared by staff at the clinic.

CHHF has its own well at the clinic and has never experienced a problem with water quality. As a precaution, a water purification system supplies the ice machine and the spigot on the front porch. Drinking water is available from a large dispenser in the kitchen.

If you experience any problem, notify one of the medical professionals on the team as there are medications available to make your recovery easy and fast.