



Tips for Preparing for a Successful Medical Mission

To-Do Checklist

Things to Plan

- Set your budget
- Pick your destination/dates
- Research your destination
- Book your flights
- Apply for visas

Essentials to Bring

- Passport and valid IDs
- Visas
- Flight tickets
- Money (local and foreign currency)
- Credit cards
- Vaccination records
- Travel Insurance

Preparing for a successful medical mission requires careful planning and organization. Here's a checklist to help you prepare:



Research

- Identify reputable organizations or groups organizing medical missions.
- Research the mission's location, demographics, and healthcare needs.
- Assess the mission's duration, resources, and support available.
- Make sure your goals align with the medical mission organization.
- Identify if your trip will be tax deductible.
- Identify if your trip offers continuing education for your service.



Obtain Necessary Permissions and Documentation

- Ensure your passport is valid and will not expire during the mission trip time frame. Most countries require it to be valid even 6 months after your trip.
- Check visa requirements and apply for necessary travel documents.
- Verify if any additional certifications or licenses are needed for the destination.

Coordinate Logistics

- Arrange transportation for your flights- use points if possible!
- Generally local transportation, and accommodations are managed by the medical mission organization. Confirm that!
- Communicate with the mission organizers to understand the logistics and expectations.
- Pack essential medical supplies, equipment, and personal items based on the mission's needs and local conditions.
- Determine the cash you will need on hand and if it is helpful to exchange American dollars before the trip.

Review Medical Skills and Knowledge

- Refresh your knowledge on common medical conditions and treatments relevant to the mission's location.
- Familiarize yourself with local healthcare practices, cultural sensitivities, and language basics.
- Attend any required training sessions or workshops provided by the mission organizers.
- Print a list of key phrases if the language is different than your own. Even speaking a few phrases creates trust with the people you will serve.

Gather Required Medications and Supplies

- Create a checklist of medications, medical supplies, and equipment needed for the mission.
- Coordinate with the mission organizers to ensure availability and access to necessary resources.
- Verify if any specific vaccines or prophylactic medications are required for the destination.
- Check with the CDC for suggested vaccinations or malaria prevention.
- Identify the population you will serve including women and children and be prepared for special donations like small toys that may be helpful.

Organize Personal Protective Equipment

- Ensure you have an adequate supply of PPE, including gloves, masks, goggles, and gowns.
- Verify that the PPE meets the necessary quality standards and is appropriate for the mission's requirements.
- Pack extra PPE to account for any unforeseen circumstances or shortages.

Collaborate and Communicate

- Connect with other healthcare professionals participating in the mission to establish teamwork and effective communication.
- Discuss roles and responsibilities with the mission team to ensure smooth coordination.
- Understand the chain of command and reporting procedures for emergencies or critical situations.
- Attend any team meetings the organization will offer to get to know the team members and goals of the mission group.

Consider Cultural Sensitivities

- Learn about the local customs, traditions, and social norms to ensure respectful interactions.
- Adapt your approach to patient care to align with cultural sensitivities and preferences.
- Seek guidance from local translators or cultural experts, if available.

Prepare for Emergencies

- Review and refresh your knowledge of emergency protocols and procedures.
- Pack a first aid kit, emergency medications, and equipment necessary for acute medical interventions.
- Ensure you have access to communication devices or methods for contacting local emergency services if needed.
- Register for the US embassy in the country you'll be serving in. Notify family members of your travel plans.
- Look ahead for predicted weather in the area and plan accordingly.
- Take a picture of your passport and credit cards and email them to yourself as extra protection in case they are lost or stolen.

Take Care of Yourself

- Prioritize your physical and mental well-being before and during the mission.
- Get adequate rest, eat nutritious meals, and stay hydrated.
- Prepare for the local climate and consider necessary precautions, such as insect repellent and sun protection.
- Keep a journal or log to document your experiences, challenges, and successes during the mission.

- Reflect on the mission's impact on both the local community and your personal growth.
- Share your insights and experiences with colleagues, organizations, and the wider healthcare community.
- Remember, each medical mission is unique, and it's crucial to adapt this checklist to the specific requirements of your mission. Collaborating closely with the mission organizers and fellow healthcare professionals will contribute to a successful and rewarding experience.



BRIDGES is a non-profit organization that takes nurses and healthcare professionals world-wide to offer free medical services in communities of need. Our goal is to create a bridge where both the volunteer and the recipient benefit from each other.

Visit our website for more information about our organization and to see upcoming missions.

