GENERAL RESOURCES

General information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the

- USAC Health & Disability Guide in your Gateway account,
- Health & Insurance and
- Safety Abroad sections of your UWEC Study Abroad Handbook.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has vaccination suggestions, how to stay healthy when abroad, and health information specific to South Korea. You can review the CDC site for South Korea here.

Due to an increasing measles and mumps cases worldwide, we strongly encourage all students to check their vaccine history to see if they have had the MMR vaccine.

MALARIA
Per the Center for Disease Control, malaria risk in South Korea is limited to the months of March–December in rural areas in the northern parts of Incheon, Kangwon-do, and Kyŏnggi-do Provinces, including the demilitarized zone (DMZ). While you will not be living in an affected area, you may visit the DMZ on a brief field trip or during personal travel. You should therefore consult with your health care provider for recommendations. The decision about what you will do about malaria risk is one you must make yourself. Neither the CIE nor USAC can make this decision for you. If you decide to take anti-malaria medication, follow the instructions from your physician carefully. Remember that malaria is rarely acquired if you've taken the proper precautions.

The best way to avoid malaria is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes! To minimize mosquito bites:

- Cover up with clothing. Wear garments with a high neckline (or a bandana around the neck), long sleeves, and long pants.
- Use a DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed skin AND permethrin, an insecticide, on clothing.
- Avoid shiny jewelry and perfumed cosmetics, as they attract mosquitoes.
- Remain indoors at dusk or after dark.
- When traveling on your own, choose accommodations with tidy grounds and air conditioning or with windows having well-fitting screens. Use mosquito netting elsewhere.
- Check that bed netting has no holes or rips. Tuck netting under your mattress.
- Avoid local preventatives. Many are unproven, such as mosquito coils or Avon Skin-So-Soft. While these are popular folklore insect repellents in the U.S., they perform poorly in scientific studies.

If you become ill: Early treatment is essential if you do acquire malaria. Consider any flu-like illness with fever in a malarial area to be malaria until proven otherwise. Common symptoms of malaria include fever and chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and dizziness. See a physician promptly! Delay in seeking medical care and delay in diagnosis increases the chances of complications. Per the CDC, "Malaria symptoms will occur at least 7 to 9 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Fever in the first week of travel in a malaria-risk area is unlikely to be malaria; however, you should see a doctor right away if you develop a fever during your trip. Malaria may cause anemia and jaundice. Malaria infections with Plasmodium falciparum, if not promptly treated, may cause kidney failure, coma, and death. Despite using the protective measures outlined above, travelers may still develop malaria up to a year after returning from a malarious area. You should see a doctor immediately if you develop a fever anytime during the year following your return and tell the physician of your travel."
TRAVELER'S DIARRHEA

The most common health problem for U.S. Americans when traveling is intestinal upset. The change in diet, the different meal schedule, and organisms unfamiliar to your system are possible causes.

A very common ailment is traveler’s diarrhea. Prevention includes being careful about where and what you eat and avoiding dairy products if they are not pasteurized. If you do get it, the following suggestions can help speed recovery and guide your decision to seek formal care:

1. It will usually run its course in three to five days. The worst symptoms usually occur the first day. Bed rest may help relieve cramps.
2. The main risk is dehydration. Maintain fluid intake. An excellent source of fluid replacement is ORS or Oraltye, a prepackaged liquid sold in many countries.
3. An over-the-counter medicine like Pepto Bismol may help relieve nausea and vomiting.

If nausea and vomiting persist for more than 24 hours, if you develop a fever over 101°F, or if you develop severe abdominal pain, contact a physician immediately.

WATER

Tap water is not safe to drink in South Korea. Although it is chlorinated in major cities (and the CDC advises it is okay), there are still many reports of upset stomach. There are conflicting messages as to whether or not the water is safe to drink but when in doubt, we suggest you drink bottled/filtered water. Most people do brush their teeth with tap water, but you may wish to use bottled water for this as well.

HEALTHCARE

Yonsei University:
- Mental Health: Yonsei has an International Counseling & Coaching Center that provides therapy services in a variety of languages. [Click here](#) to learn more.
- Health Services: Students have access to the Health Services Center, on the 2nd floor of the Student Union Building. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Gwangju University:
- Mental Health: At this time, Chonnam University doesn’t offer mental health support on campus. If you are in need of support, please reach out to the UWEC Study Abroad coordinator to begin making arrangements with CISI.
- Health Services: A Health Services Center (Medicare Center) is available for students to access. [Click here](#) to learn more.
RESTRICTIONS ON MEDICATIONS

Per the U.S. State Department, you should be aware that South Korea's customs authorities enforce strict regulation about importing and exporting items such as narcotics and prescription drugs as well as non-prescription health supplements. These regulations apply to prescription and non-prescription medications that are brought in with travelers as well as those sent through the mail. Since the same strict regulations apply to items mailed to and from the Republic of Korea, several U.S. citizens have been prosecuted for participation in drug smuggling via international mail.

Amphetamines are illegal in Korea and even prescription amphetamines and other prescription narcotics will not be permitted into the country without advance permission from the Korea Food and Drug Administration (KFDA) in the form of a "bring-in permit letter." Please work with CISI insurance to determine what you must do to bring your prescriptions into South Korea.

MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

The Korean culture is known to stigmatize mental health and those who receive mental health support. This is important to know and understand before traveling there. To a tourist, exploring Korea for a few days/weeks, this may not be noticed, however, being you plan to stay in Korea for a longer period of time, you may notice this. Korean students receive a lot of pressure (from families and society) to fit in and achieve great success. Many Koreans believe that receiving mental health support equals weakness so they don’t seek support. In addition, the Korean culture has placed value on being thin and light skinned which has led to high rates of eating disorders amongst the younger generations. This could be a triggering experience for anyone who has a history with eating disorders and is something to take seriously. Consulting with your U.S. therapist/doctor is advised.

While there is still a stigma, students are able to access some mental health resources. If your campus doesn’t have resources, CISI insurance can work with you to identify an English-speaking therapist. However, do note that if you are located outside of Seoul, it may be harder to find adequate resources. If this is a concern, reach out to your UWEC study abroad coordinator to see what options are available. We want to make sure you feel supported for your experience.

CISI INSURANCE IN SOUTH KOREA
If you have an accident or become ill while studying in South Korea, you must pay the price of the medical service up front. You will then file a claim through CISI, the insurance provided through the UW System for partial or full reimbursement in accordance with plan coverages.

**SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

If you will need any disability accommodations when abroad, it is important to complete your USAC Disability and Health Accommodation Request Form on your USAC Gateway account. While USAC cannot guarantee services, they will do their best to accommodate your needs. When you complete that form, USAC will be in contact with you regarding services they can/cannot provide.

**Yonsei University** offers an array of services for students with disabilities. To learn more, click here.

**Gwangju University** hasn’t provided information on resources they have available. Please reach out to your UWEC and/or USAC coordinator to determine what is available.

It is also important to look at the level of accessibility in South Korea in general. To find more information on the topic, please see the “Laws and Special Circumstances” tab on the U.S. State Department South Korea Country Information page.

**SAFETY IN SOUTH KOREA**

**Pick-Pocketing:** Pick-pocketing is common on public transportation and at popular tourist sites throughout South Korea. To reduce the risk, do not have your phone or other valuables out in public spaces. An iPhone is a target for pick-pocketers. If you carry a purse, make sure it is across the body and has zippers. Keep your wallet in a front pocket, not a back pocket. Only carry small amounts of cash on you to minimize loss. Using a money belt under your clothing is another way to prevent valuables from being stolen.

**Demonstrations:** Demonstrations can be common in South Korea, especially near the U.S. Embassy. It is advised that students stay clear of these areas to avoid confrontations. Even if a demonstration is intended to be peaceful, it could turn violent.

**Monsoon/Typhoon Seasons:**

Monsoons usually occur between June-August and typhoon between May-November. With both weather events, there could be heavy rains, flooding and landslides. Take pre-cautions and follow local weather advice.

**Hiking:**

If you decide to go hiking, please make sure you hike with a buddy and let others know where you are going and your plans for return. While hiking, weather can turn very quickly, so be prepared.
TENSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO KOREAS

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (also known as North Korea or the DPRK) and the Republic of Korea are legally still in a state of war. There is peace on the Korean peninsula because of an agreement that has lasted for close to 60 years. There are ever changing dynamics of the Korean peninsula. At the time of editing, the relationship seems to be mending and looking up, but you should always be aware how quickly relations can change. In 2017 tensions between North and South Korea flared again due to North Korea testing nuclear weapons. In August 2015, tensions flared as North Korea fired shell on the city of Yeoncheon. While they were no causalities, both sides went into pre-war status and began talks. Talks ended after a few days and tensions eased. In February 2013, North Korea conducted a nuclear weapon test that was widely condemned internationally and set off a series of threats from North Korea.

The US State Department has placed a Travel Advisory, Level 4: Do Not Travel on North Korea. The CIE strictly forbids any UWEC student traveling to North Korea. The State Department lists that U.S. passports are not valid for travel to, in or through North Korea, unless they are specially validated by the Department of State. To read the full travel advisory, see here.

LGBTQIA+ TRAVELERS

The U.S. State Department has information on their LGBTI Travel Information Page. In addition, you can view the CIE’s Gender + Sexuality page for further resources.

RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

General information and resources can be found in the Health & Safety section of the UWEC study abroad website.

911 EQUIVALENT IN SOUTH KOREA

If you are in an emergency situation in South Korea, the local equivalent to the 911 emergency line in South Korea is 112 for the police and 119 for ambulance or fire. We suggest you save these numbers in your cell phone.

MARIJUANA AND OTHER ILLEGAL DRUGS

Note that marijuana is illegal in Korea. People may be more open about it, but the possession and use of marijuana is illegal. Even carrying it on your person can be considered drug trafficking. U.S. citizenship offers no protection if you break a Korean law. There is NOTHING the CIE, USAC, your host university, or the U.S. government can do if you are found in violation of local laws.
In addition to legal penalties, you are putting yourself at risk of robbery or assault, or you may get a much more dangerous combination of drugs than you thought you were buying.