

ALERT: Lately there has been an increasing level of crime in Guatemala, largely centered in and around Guatemala City. HTI is continually monitoring the situation and making adjustments as needed for the safety of our teams. Team members will be given further instructions to ensure personal safety in the airport on the day of departure.

HTI TRIP POLICIES & DISCLAIMER

We are honored that you are interested in spreading God's love through medical evangelism with Health Talents International. We intend for our work together to be a spiritual experience for everyone, including the North American team, our patients and our Central American workers. *A Board of Directors oversees the activities of Health Talents, which is a ministry of the churches of Christ.* Every team member should have a spiritual view of life and must agree to personal conduct that honors the Christ-centered nature of our work. It is not a requirement that participants be members of the church of Christ. Respect and tolerance for different faith traditions among team members is presumed.

Since we are working in Central America in association with local Christian congregations, our teams must remain culturally sensitive and act in ways that are not offensive in light of local Christian practices. Actions accepted in the United States by some Christian people may be offensive or not acceptable in Central America.

Team participants are expected to follow the policies outlined below:

1. For the duration of our time outside the United States, abstain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs and improper sexual conduct, whether at clinic sites or on side trips for shopping and sightseeing.
2. Attend all devotional sessions throughout the week and the worship service on Sunday.
3. **Do not** wear expensive jewelry (gold, diamonds) it's just asking for trouble!
4. Dress modestly; wearing shorts to clinic is not appropriate for either sex. Scrubs, lightweight blue jeans, khakis, and skirts are all just fine.
5. The HTI Board does not permit soliciting of monetary gifts by nationals...and none are expected from team members.
6. If you encounter a situation in which you feel drawn to give money as a result of a perceived need, please discuss it with the North American team leader before discussing it with anyone else or acting upon that desire so that the need can be properly evaluated.
7. Cooperate with the team leader's decisions at all times. The trip leader has been assigned responsibility for the group and his/her decision regarding any changes in arrangements due to unforeseen developments will be final. The team leader will make decisions based on input from our emergency contact in the United States, US Embassy, our travel agent and team members.
8. The HTI Board of Directors respectfully requests that you refrain from bringing clothing and shoes to distribute to the villagers. The reality is that donations of clothing and shoes are tricky and we have learned that such donations don't help the work of HTI or the churches. In fact, they have an adverse effect. They cause chaos, jealousy and strife among the people and create a system of "beggars" overall.

9. Because of our experience in September, 2001, when an HTI surgical team was in Guatemala during the World Trade Center attack, we recognize the importance of team solidarity in crisis situations. Although that team was not in imminent danger, the team leader had to make decisions regarding housing and changes in transportation. Since it may be important for the group to stay together for security reasons, it is critical that the team members comply with the group leader's instructions.

Should an unforeseen change in circumstances occur in the future, the HTI policy is that the team leader and the travel agent will attempt to re-arrange travel as efficiently as possible. The team leader will take your input regarding travel plans, but if we allow the travel agent to make all the plans, she can do that *more* efficiently, and the safety of the *whole* team may be more fully addressed. Anyone who does not follow the group leader's advice and decides to make independent travel arrangements, must accept full responsibility physically and financially for the decision.

Disclaimer: *Guatemala and Nicaragua are developing countries and often experience instability. Team members should understand that while HTI will take reasonable steps to ensure the personal safety of team members, there are risks inherent in living, traveling, and working in such situations. Each team member assumes a certain amount of risk when he commits to participate in medical evangelism.*

Health Talents has sponsored medical evangelism trips for many years and has had very few problems. We want your trip to be a positive life-changing experience, so we request that you comply with the conditions of this statement.