

Hello,

I am Dr. Christopher Lynch and I am the team leader of the pharmacists participating in the Jamaica Dental Mission. This will be my 12th trip, and I thought I would share a few ideas that you might want to know before you leave.

1. An insulated thermos. The clinics have plenty of water, but it is not always very cold. A thermos filled with ice and topped off with water at the hotel in the morning will give you a refreshing cold drink all day. There is an ice machine on the 2nd floor landing of the main hotel, and one near the nurses' station in the annex building.
2. Sunscreen. When purchasing sunscreen, duration of coverage is more important than SPF. I recommend a sunscreen product with an SPF of 30. Less than 30 will not be as effective, but greater than 30 only increases the price without typically giving clinical advantage. What is more important is buying a product that is "water resistant" or "highly water resistant", as you will be either swimming or sweating at all times. Target, Wal-Mart, Walgreens and CVS all have good water resistant SPF 30 products that are relatively inexpensive. Don't waste money on expensive SPF 50-90 stuff unless you are on photosensitizing medications or are exceptionally fair. Focus instead on the water resistance as a place to spend your cash.
3. Snacks. I personally find it nice to have a snack of some sort in my room for those times when you are too hot to eat immediately following clinic, or you aren't feeling spry enough for breakfast before getting on the bus. Individually wrapped snacks are preferred for reasons of bugs and humidity. Chocolate will be a puddle before you ever reach the hotel. Pringles are my personal snack of choice (durable container, salty, carbohydrate-rich), but whatever you prefer.
4. A big cup. The hotel serves beverages in 6-8 oz cups, but the servers will fill up a larger cup if you bring it along. An insulated cup with a lid is great for enjoying a cold beverage in the pool or ocean. Something in the 20-32 oz range would probably suit your needs. A separate insulated water bottle to be used at clinic is also a good idea. You can fill it with ice water at the hotel in the morning and enjoy it all morning.
5. Put a swimming suit in your carry-on. There have been times when the truck that brings the checked luggage is delayed leaving the airport by more than an hour or two. Having swimwear in your carry-on bag will make you happy in that case.
6. OTC medications. The pharmacists will have a bag at the hotel stocked with commonly needed OTC medications. However, a few things you might want for yourself (items most commonly requested) are: anti-diarrheals (I recommend pepto-bismol or generic, as this covers more causes of diarrhea than lomotil), sunburn remedies (aloe vera gel w with lidocaine is the best), and ibuprofen (good for pretty much all pains, sunburns, inflammations, etc). We will have supplies of these and many other OTC items, but having these three things in your room ready to go might not be a bad idea. We will also have bandages, eye wash, antihistamines, glucose tablets and condoms for you if you

require any of these items. We will also have some commonly needed prescription items upon recommendation of one of the oral surgeons or dental faculty.

7. Powder. Gold-Bond, Monkey-Butt, whatever. The sweat you experience will defeat any antiperspirant. But powdering your pits and naughty bits before clinic will pay dividends by the end of the week.
8. Motion sickness medications. The bus trip to the clinics can induce motion sickness in many people. I highly recommend you purchase some meclizine tablets for this indication. Meclizine is much less sedating than traditional Dramamine, works just as well, and does not dramatically reduce your hand-eye coordination like Dramamine does.
9. Toilet paper. The clinic restrooms many times do not have toilet paper. Bringing along a packet of TP-to-go or some such may be a good idea.
10. Bug spray. I personally do not have a problem with the bugs in Jamaica, but many people do.
11. Plastic Ziploc bags. Throw a few of these in your bag. They will come in handy, especially if you want to sneak a snack from the breakfast buffet to take with you to clinic.

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