

Women's Issues

With Lindsay Woodville Gunma-Ken ALT 2012-2014

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Before you go

Write down your prescriptions and if possible get a doctor's note on why you may need certain medications; be aware of customs regulations and if your medicines are legal to take into the country.

If you have medication where you need to bring more than one month's supply, you will need to obtain a Yakkan Shoumei from your local embassy or consulate.

Stock up on OTC favorites and give your mailing address to your loved ones so that they can send you things. Please make sure to leave a list of what is illegal in Japan with whoever is sending you OTC products (you are still legally responsible for anything sent to you!)

If you can, bring some DVDs/music/books from home to keep you company during your first month! (Most people won't have Internet for 3-4 weeks).

Go to the dentist and doctor to make sure you are healthy and ready to go!

Healthcare

National Health Insurance: Insurance generally covers 70% of doctor's visits and other healthcare related costs.

- A good English speaking doctor resource is: <http://japanhealthinfo.com>

School checkups: required annually, include height, weight, x-ray, blood and urine checks.

If you have personal OTC medicine favorites consider bringing them with you to Japan. Make sure they are legal and you have the right documents for them!

<http://www.hyogoajet.net/2013/11/24/bringing-medicine-to-japan/>

You are allowed to bring one month's worth of prescription medicine with you. If you need more, you will need to obtain a Yakkan Shoumei certificate from your nearest Japanese Embassy or Consulate before you leave.

<http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/acs/tacs-medimport.html>

Notes:

Gynecology: Part 1

Ask ALTs, PAs, CIRs or Japanese friends in your area about local gynecologists

Contraceptives: Be aware that contraceptive options may be limited

Birth control: The Pill is available in Japan. Cost is ¥2,000-¥3,000 a month w/monthly check-up. Here is a helpful article about particular types of pills available:

<http://www.survivingnjapan.com/2010/12/guide-to-birth-control-pills-in-japan.html>

Clinics charge different prices and have different options, so feel free to call around and check different clinics

IUDs are available and can cost around ¥30,000, but checks around your area as not all doctors do the procedures

Emergency Contraceptives: Is available, but you may want to bring your own Plan B with you as some clinics may not offer it.

<http://www.survivingnjapan.com/2012/05/how-to-find-clinic-or-hospital-that.html>

Condoms: Size selection is not as extensive

Abortions: Are available up until the 22nd week

Gynecology: Part 2

Gynecologist: Ask fellow JETs or local Japanese friends! Use <http://japanhealthinfo.com>

NHS (National Healthcare System) covers yearly check-ups, but check with your local area to see if a voucher is needed

Certain tests are covered, however NHS does not cover STD tests

Keep in mind that many gynecologists in Japan are male, so you may also have to hunt for a female doctor

The procedure may be a bit different and often includes a “privacy curtain”

Feminine Products: There are a variety of sizes and shapes to sanitary napkins (just have to find the right description!), tampons are less prominent, but available in some drug stores.

Notes:

Gender Norms

Celebrity status: People in the community will want to know what you do in your free time, what kinds of things you buy, where you hang out, who you were seen with etc.

Stereotypes: People may have expectations of you (e.g., all Americans have blonde hair and blue eyes), be understanding and be willing to gently explain differences

Personal Boundaries: may be a bit more relaxed than you're used to in some ways (e.g., female students poking breasts; questions regarding marriage, children, age)

Try to be as flexible as you feel comfortable with about the above. However, if at any point a student crosses boundaries you are comfortable with, speak with your go-between about appropriate steps.

Safety

Traveling in Japan: Traveling in Japan is like traveling anywhere else! So be SAFE and AWARE

- Be smart and follow general safety guidelines
- You will attract a certain amount of attention simply because you look different, but in most cases it is harmless curiosity

Harassment: Harassment can occur anywhere, including at school from students and teachers - just be firm and show your disapproval

- "chikan" - a very harsh way of saying "pervert" and is usually used by women on trains who have been grabbed; not a word to be used lightly

Clothing: Part 1

Sizing: Finding clothing sizes can be difficult. Most retailers don't sell clothing sizes higher than 6 or 8. However, I offer you hope!

- Uniqlo, Gap, Shimamura (しまむら) , J Crew, Costco, L.L. Bean and thrift stores like Hardoff all offer larger sizes
- One lady's dress is another ladies tunic!
- Marshmallow girls stay strong!

Notes:

Clothing: Part 2

Bras: Bring from home or order online (smaller sizes are generally padded); includes sports bras

Shoes: generally the largest size shoe sold (LL) is equivalent to women's size 8; you may also want to bring socks if your shoe size tends to be bigger

*Some specialty stores e.g. hiking stores, ski resorts, and bowling alleys might carry larger sizes. Call to confirm before taking the trip!

Dressing for Work

Work:

- Make a good first impression! Dress professionally. No sleeveless shirts/dress, no cleavage, no see through clothing, you might want to wear pantyhose with a skirt or dress, no shorts, no super bold accessories, clean nails
- Dress your best and watch how others are dressed in your office. You'll see first year teachers wearing a suit for an entire year. When in doubt ask!
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Outside of Work: Remember you are always an ambassador of America in Japan!

Take Care of Yourself!

Toiletries: Face washes may not be the same as in America. If you prefer a particular brand, we recommend stocking up on a few before leaving. Also, try experimenting with different products until you find one you like. You may find toothpaste and deodorant may not work as well as products from home.

Make-up: You have many options for things like mascara and eyeliner etc., however foundations are limited due to skin tone. Foundations might be oily as well.

Whitening Products: Many skin care lines carry whitening agents - labeled as '美白' or ホワイトニング (whitening)

Remember to treat yourself right! Go to hot springs (温泉, onsen) or hot baths (銭湯, sento), or enjoy BATH BOMBS from LUSH at home

Notes:

Hair

General Info: Depending on where you are in Japan, your summer can be very humid and your winters VERY dry. You might want to try using a new anti frizz product or try owning that frizzy-ness with cute accessories you get from places like Humpty Dumpty!

Haircuts and Coloring: Talk to JETs in your area and make a date! Some salons may not be accustomed to various hair textures. Coloring products may be a lot stronger. Proceed with caution!

Don't forget to take PuriKura after!

Feel Free to Email us!

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Have an AMAZING time on JET!

Notes: