
Women's Issues

— Dayana Mendoza (Hyogo, 2017-2020) —

Healthcare

- **National Health Insurance:** generally covers 70% of doctor's visits and other healthcare-related costs. Supervisors and CIRs/PSG are good resources.
- **School check-ups required annually**
- If you have some preferred OTC medicines, consider bringing them with you to Japan. BUT make sure they are legal and you have the right documents for them!
- You are allowed to bring **one month's worth of prescription medicine** with you. To bring more, you will need a Yakkan Shomei certificate from your nearest Japanese Embassy or Consulate before you leave.

Gynecologist

Ask other JETs (including PAs) or Japanese friends in your area about local gynecologists + clinics.

- **Tampons** are available, though may be less available in very rural areas, but Amazon Japan is great if you need it shipped. Bring extra tampons in case.
- Healthcare covers **yearly check ups**, and certain tests are covered. **STD tests** are not covered by NHS.
 - Note: Many gynecologists in Japan are **male**. Also, the procedure may be a bit different and often includes a “**privacy curtain.**”

Gynecologist

Be aware that contraceptive options are limited

- **Birth control:** The Pill is available in Japan at ¥2,000-¥3,000 a month w/ monthly check-up. Clinics charge different prices and have different options, so feel free to call around to check different clinics.
- **IUDs** are available and can cost around ¥30,000, but check around your area as not all doctors do the procedures.
- **Emergency contraceptives** are available, but access may be difficult.
- **Abortions** are available but have different restrictions than in the U.S.

*also note there are different misconceptions about condoms in Japan.

Clothing in Japan

- In general, **size ranges are narrower and go smaller.**
- **Clothes:** Japanese medium = US small. M is often “one size fits all.”
- **Bras:** Sizes are smaller and measured differently. Bring extra bras, order online, or ask around for stores that sell larger sizes if you think
- your size might be difficult to find.
- **Shoes:** Sizes available generally range from 5.5 to 8 (equiv. to Japan
- size 21.5 to 24). There are specialty stores for sizes above that.

Don't despair! Here's a fun kimono story.

Dress for Success

- **Work:** Keep it professional. When in doubt, more coverage.
 - Cover shoulders and cleavage. Don't wear tank tops.
 - Keep hems at the knee.
 - Beware of sheer fabrics. Conceal bra straps.
 - Watches, nail polish, jewelry, and piercings.
 - Indoor shoes.
 - Our advice – see what your other co-workers wear, some schools are less formal than others -- if you're worried about what to pack, contact your predecessor for some advice.
- **Outside work:** Be yourself, but remember you remain visible to your community as a representative of your country and the JET Program.

Safety in Japan

Traveling in Japan is very safe, but still be aware of your surroundings

- Kobans (Police Box) are everywhere
 - “Chikan” is a very harsh way of saying “pervert” and is usually used by women on trains who have been grabbed; *Don't use this word lightly*
- Harassment can happen anywhere from outside and inside work. Take a firm stance.
 - Be sure to report any instances of harassment
- There are also Women-only train compartments

Gender Norms

- Every situation is Different!
- You may encounter cultural difference (gender roles and expectations)
 - Stereotype of Japanese women vs. American women:
- Differences and expectations may appear anywhere and everywhere
 - Try to remember that in some place, people don't have a lot of exposure to foreigners, so they rely on what they see in media or hear from others.

Helpful Resources

- <http://www.survivingnjapan.com>
 - <http://www.survivingnjapan.com/2010/12/guide-to-birth-control-pills-in-japan.html>
- <http://www.hyogoajet.net/2013/11/24/bringing-medicine-to-japan/>
 - About identifying legal and illegal drugs in Japan
- <https://savvytokyo.com>
- <https://www.iherb.com>
 - All sorts of Feminie hygiene products and more.
- <https://www.theflyingpig.com>
 - Costco Products delivered to your door!
- JET Ladies+ group on Facebook