

Rotaplast Firozabad, India



February 23 -March 8, 2020

Team Notes



Welcome!! We have 25 medical professionals and non-medical volunteers who will bring their talents, education, experience and energy to create a great team. This document will give you some basic information to make your preparations easier and your stay in Agra, India more pleasant. The hope is that the experience is as problem-free as possible while serving as many children as we can. If there are any medical questions, protocols, guidelines, et cetera, please forward them to Dr. Alex McCulloch. General questions and issues regarding team travel, logistics, et cetera should be referred to me, Tom Fox, the Mission Director.

Mission Director

Tom Fox

Medical Director

Dr. Alex

McCulloch

ROTAPLAST FIROZABAD , INDIA

WHERE WE ARE GOING

FIROZABAD FACTS

Latitudinal parallel: 27.18°N

Longitudinal meridian: 78.02°E

Altitude: 540 feet above sea level

Population: 603,797 (Census 2011)

Average Temperatures: High 100* (Max. is usually Apr-Jun), Low 67°F (Min. is usually in Dec-Feb)

Desirable Clothes: Woolens for winters and light cotton for summers

Rainfall: 27.4 inches

Monsoon: July to mid-September

Season: Extreme climate with very hot summer and cold winter

Best time to visit: October to March

Languages: Hindi, English, Urdu and Punjabi

Religions: Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Bahai Faith

REGISTERING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

US Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) / Embassy Location:

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country.

STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency.

STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

To register, go to http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html

THE HOSPITAL WHERE WE WILL BE WORKING

UNITY HOSPITAL

Nagla Bahu, Meera Chauraha, Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh 283203, India

- The hospital is approximately 10-15 minutes from the hotel.
- Please make sure that you follow all the hospital regulations when going in and out of the surgical area. Shoe covers, hats, and masks as well as lab coats are required in certain places, so please make sure that you follow this protocol.

HOW AND WHEN WILL WE GET THERE?

The majority of the team will be flying out of San Francisco International Airport (SFO) on **Sunday February 23rd. We will check in together -time to follow**. Some team members will be traveling from elsewhere around the world. We will meet in either Dubai or New Delhi depending on their flight arrangements. Final flight itineraries will be sent by Rotaplast. It is important that you check your itinerary and respond appropriately if there are any problems. Once your flight itineraries are finalized there can be no deviation. The costs make changes extremely prohibitive for Rotaplast. While traveling please wear a navy blue blazer/jacket, a Rotaplast shirt if you have one (Rotaplast will be providing shirts for the team at the airport), and otherwise a white shirt, khaki colored pants or skirt, comfortable shoes (we will be handling our own luggage and Rotaplast boxes). You will also be given a name tag. Please wear it at all times for the duration of the mission.

It is critical that ALL the team members leaving from SFO be at the airport at the assigned times since we need to check in as a group. **You will be allowed to check in one (1) piece of luggage.** They will be checked in directly through to New Delhi.

Emirates : The main body of the team will be flying from San Francisco to Dubai and then onto New Delhi. Dubai International Airport is quite comfortable. Emirates is quite hospitable and provides international travelers some nice amenities both in the air as well as on the layover.

Arrival: We will probably arrive in New Delhi in the middle of the night (2:40 AM). Final flight arrangements have not been made as of this handbook writing. Most international flights arrive then so Immigration and Customs will likely be crowded. **Please stay together as a team!**

Immigration: When we arrive in New Delhi, we will proceed to the immigration desk and get in line with passport and immigration form in hand. The immigration officer will stamp your passport. **It is very important that we stay together as a team during this process as well.**

Customs: From immigration, we will go to the baggage claim area, where we will get our luggage and boxes. **We will then go through Customs together as a team.** We should expect delays and some confusion.

Other Arrival Information: We will travel from the airport to the hotel - about a 3 hour bus ride - then we will be able to get a few hours rest prior to going to the hospital to unpack and arrange set up for the opening clinic.

HOW AND WHAT SHOULD I PACK

In order to have a more unified appearance, we ask that you have available a “uniform” for official occasions. This means a navy jacket, a white top/Rotaplast shirt and khaki colored pants or skirt. Rotaplast shirts will be distributed at the airport for the SFO group and will be provided to the others upon arrival. Since we are a team, please wear the **uniform on travel day** and plan to wear it for any official meetings outside the hospital. You will need to **wear the uniform for Pre- Clinic**. We will take our official team picture at that time.

Special Events: Typically, the local Rotarians host a special event and nicer attire is appropriate. More information will be provided as we get closer to the mission.

Packing for the trip: Remember to bring the following:

- Scrub clothing (at least one set for non-medical team members, could be more for some positions, and at least three sets for medical team members)
- Rotaplast “uniform” - blue blazer and khaki pants/skirt with white shirt
- Dressy clothing for at least one nice party
- Alarm clock and earplugs
- Waist pack or money belt

You may wish to consider bringing the following:

- Cipro
- Anti-diarrhea medication such as Imodium
- Pepto Bismol tablets
- Prescription cough medicine
- Cold remedies
- Kleenex
- Hand sanitizer
- Insect repellent, sunscreen, hat, sunglasses

Don't forget your passport! Pack light!! Remember that you are only allocated one suitcase and one carry-on. The other part of your baggage allowance is reserved for one box of medical equipment and supplies per person. Be sure to bring your medications. Remember that liquids, gels, etc. should be in the checked bag. Otherwise, they need to fit into a clear, one quart plastic bag.

IMPORTANT

Baggage allowance on Emirates for international flights is as follows:

One Checked bag: 50lbs measuring no more than 62 linear inches.

Carry on: 40lbs measuring no more than 45 linear inches.

Second bag allowance: Rotaplast Box

Mission Dress: Comfortable cotton slacks, skirts or pants can be worn to and from the hospital. Shorts are appropriate at the hotel but are not to be worn while traveling to and from the hospital, where more modest clothing is best. Since we will spend almost all of our time at the hospital, you will need several pairs of scrubs; hats and shoe covers are supplied. Bring very comfortable shoes, as even the non-medical volunteers will spend most of the day on their feet. We will be going back and forth from the hotel to the hospital in casual clothes. The hotel does not have a pool, but opportunities for swimming may occur so you may choose to bring a bathing suit.

Do I need a converter/adaptor for the electricity?

Indian electrical voltage is 220 volts and the plugs are three round pins shaped in a triangle. You will need adapters to use your appliances and for all your charging devices. Local Rotarians will be able to identify local hardware stores to purchase them in-country, but it may be better to obtain one ahead of time. Multi-use adapters can be purchased at Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Lowes, etc.

ROTARY MEETINGS

There is likely to be some local Rotary Club meetings that we are invited to during our stay. Rotarians should bring along several club flags to exchange with Rotarians in India. Though the surgery schedule is paramount, all team members should attend these meetings as a show of respect to our hosts. They will be excited and grateful that we are there. It's hard to be gracious when you are exhausted, but let's try our very best!

WHAT ABOUT GIFTS?

We will host a cake/soft drinks "Thank you" party for the hospital staff with whom we have worked. If you'd like to give a small gift to those who have assisted in your area of assignment, helped as translators or problem-solved during the week, then this is the appropriate day to quietly give the person your "thank you." Some gifts that seem to be a hit are small flashlights, pens, scarves, cosmetics, jewelry, Rotary pins

from your club/district (for Rotarians), and calendars from your city/ state. For your information, at a “closing” event we (Rotaplast) will be giving certificates of recognition to the medical staff and Rotarians who have been our mission partners.

WHAT KIND OF WEATHER CAN WE EXPECT?

It will be the Summer season in this region of India, and we can expect temperatures in the 80s-100s during the day and the 70s at nighttime. However, any Rotaplast mission that I’ve ever been in North Indian very hot and humid, despite the season. (Be flexible and adaptable) A light jacket or sweatshirt is appropriate. A hat and sun protection is advisable for our day off.

WHAT SHALL WE WEAR WHILE TRAVELING?

Each team member is asked to wear the Rotaplast “uniform” - khaki slacks, a Rotaplast or other white shirt (Rotaplast polo shirts will be distributed at the airport), and a navy blue blazer. Not only will we look organized and professional, but it will make our group easily distinguishable and perhaps help in going through Immigration and Customs. You will note that this has been mentioned numerous times. Simply, that is because it is important.

WHERE WILL WILL STAY?

We will be staying at the Hotel Parador which is approximately 15 minutes from the hospital. The hotel is a four-story structure with clean, air conditioned rooms, private baths and Wi-Fi (charge). There is a restaurant, a bar, and other amenities. It should be very comfortable and meet our team’s needs quite nicely.

Hotel Parador

Agra Rd, Alinagar Kenjra, Uttar Pradesh 283203, India
Phone: +91 72529 79750

Meals: We will have breakfast at the hotel. Arrangements will be made for an early start. Lunch and snacks will be provided at the hospital. If

you have a food allergy and/or need a special diet, please let me know immediately. Dinner will most likely be at the hotel. They should accommodate all team members including those who arrive late from the hospital. On some evenings, you may want to be “on our own.” There are full service restaurants at the hotel as well as in walking distance from the hotel. Occasionally there will be group meetings at the end of the day, and you will be notified appropriately.

Water: Bottled water will be made available at the hospital and at the hotel.

HOW WILL WE GET AROUND?

Arrangements have been made for a bus to take us to the hospital. The bus will pick us up at the hospital and return us to the hotel at the end of each day. There will be early and late trips both ways. Street clothes should be worn to and from the hospital.

WHAT WILL OUR SCHEDULE BE?

The mission schedule will be sent!!!

HOSPITALITY ROOM

We will have a **hospitality suite daily** and all team members are encouraged to attend. It is a time to relax and talk over the experiences of the day. The Quartermaster will collect \$25 from each team member to help supply the hospitality room with both non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages and snacks. Please bring your favorite snack to share at the hospitality room. This is a very important part of a Rotaplast mission. It enables us to get to know each other, support one another, and discuss issues and problems in a casual manner. I encourage all team members to attend hospitality sessions.

WHAT ABOUT GRATUITIES?

We will collect \$25 from the non-local members of the team to provide for gratuities, as appropriate, i.e. bus drivers, hotel services (other than own rooms).

WHAT ABOUT SAFETY AND CRIME?

I take safety and security seriously and we will take it seriously as a team. We are an American NGO medical team traveling in a foreign country. Like any other metropolitan area we must take general precaution. Stay as a group. Do not go anywhere alone. Let someone (preferably the Mission Director) know where you are going and provide your anticipated timetable. Our Rotarian hosts will be able to better suggest places that are alright and others we should avoid.

Always carry your money in a money belt or in a safe manner. Carry your passport and keep it with you. Expensive jewelry should be left at home to avoid the risk of being stolen. iPods, tablet and laptop computers, cell phones, etc. should be guarded at all times and never left unattended. We should have a secured room at the hospital where these items can be kept while we are working.

There have also been some terrorism incidents and threats made against westerners in that region. This should not be too much of a concern but we should be vigilant and look out for one another at all times.

I always prefer to stay as a team when we travel and move about the country.

WHAT ABOUT TAKING PHOTOS?

Please ask permission of anyone you wish to photograph. We have a photojournalist, who will be taking many pictures that will be shared.

WHAT ABOUT THE NEWS MEDIA?

All representatives of the media are to be referred to Dr. Alex McCulloch, Medical Director, or to me as the Mission Director. Please do not offer information other than to refer them to us.

WHAT IS THE MONETARY SYSTEM?

The Rupee is the national currency for India.

Exchange Rate is approximately: \$1US = ₹69.16 Rupee

What money should you bring?

Most in-country expenses are covered by Rotaplast or our Rotarian hosts. However, meals during travel, those specified or those you prefer to eat out on your own, souvenirs, laundry, internet and other incidental expenses will be your responsibility. You should also plan for the following: Hospitality Room & Gratuities \$50.

Credit and ATM cards should be accepted at the hotel and at most major commercial establishments. Please make certain that you notify your bank and/or credit card company prior to leaving on the mission. There will be opportunities to exchange currency during the mission. It is suggested that you have at least \$100 in \$20 denominations. Bills should be crisp, new or in excellent condition as most banks will not accept US currency that is worn or torn in any manner.

WHAT IF SOMEONE GETS SICK?

A two week international mission in a developing country typically involves at least one person getting sick. No worries. If you are going to get sick you want to be with an American medical team. Dr. Abha Goel the Lead Pediatrician, will serve as the team doctor. Should you have any medical concerns or a condition that you feel someone on the team should know about, please contact Dr. Goel prior to the mission. Dr. Goel will also have a small supply of meds that will help fend off the typical mission-related stomach and cold issues, etc.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In the weeks and days leading up to the mission, I will pass on to you as much information as possible. I don't want anyone to feel unprepared. A Rotaplast mission is a major undertaking and it requires good communication among everyone involved. Watch your email as information regarding travel, emergency contact information, hotel, etc. will be forthcoming.

CLOSING

I ask that everyone be patient and flexible. Please keep in mind that we are going into an environment that we do not control. We are guests in partnership with Rotarians who are also partnering with the Hospital and trying to maximize the number of children we can serve. We cannot over emphasize the need for flexibility. Non-medical team members may be asked to deviate from their regular jobs, if a need arises in another area. Rotaplast is hard work. But you will not find a more rewarding work than this! 😊

My great hope is that one day a child who had their little face fixed, wins a Nobel Prize, becomes a leader of world peace, or finds a cure for some debilitating disease, all because a group of caring volunteers took two weeks out of their busy schedules and traveled to a distant land to do something profound and game-changing or a stranger. Rotaplast changes lives and you are going to be part of it. While there is a great deal of information here, you may still have questions. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please let me know immediately if you want your own room single rooms at approximately \$65 a day.

Please send your shirt size so I can have a shirt ready for you!!!

Thanks to Brian Walker for letting me plagiarize his handbook from last year. With minor changes, I think it is still correct.

Tom Fox

Mission Director

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