

Medical Information for Applicants

In order to make sure that Peace Corps is able to protect the health and safety of its Volunteers overseas, Peace Corps requires that an applicant have the physical and mental capacity, with or without a medical accommodation, to perform the essential functions of a Volunteer for a full tour of duty without unreasonable disruption due to health problems. Peace Corps may not be able to accommodate certain medical or psychiatric conditions.

Stable conditions as well as medication regimes (both medical and psychiatric) can be appropriate for Peace Corps service and are considered during the pre-service evaluation. Recent changes in these conditions or medication regimes (both medical and psychiatric) are evaluated on an individual basis and may require a period of proven stability prior to Peace Corps service.

Because of the nature of the countries in which Peace Corps serves, the scope of medical care available in those countries, and the conditions under which Volunteers live and work, the Peace Corps may not be able to accommodate certain medical or psychiatric conditions.

After individually assessing each applicant, Peace Corps is typically *unable* to reasonably accommodate applicants with the conditions below. This list may not include all conditions:

- Addison's Disease
- Allergic Reaction-*life threatening*
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (*Lou Gehrig's Disease*)
- Aneurysm- *inoperable*
- Asthma-*severe*
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Cancer (recent treatment for cancer or cancer with metastasis)
- Cardiac Arrhythmias – *symptomatic*
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Complex health conditions with multiple diagnoses
- Conditions-*requiring blood thinner medication*
- Conditions-*requiring oral or injectable steroids*
- Connective Tissue Disorders
- Coronary Artery Disease
- Crohn's Disease
- Diabetes-*with any complications*
- Diverticulitis
- Endocarditis
- Esophageal Varices
- Glomerulonephritis- *chronic*
- Heart Conditions-*chronic*
- Heart Failure
- Hematological Disorder-*chronic*
- Hemophilia
- Hepatitis-*chronic*
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease
- Irreversible Lung Disease (emphysema)
- Iritis, *chronic*
- Kidney Stones *recurrent*
- Major Depression *recurrent*
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Multiple Sclerosis – *no exacerbation or new symptoms for a minimum of 10 years.*
- Myasthenia Gravis
- Narcolepsy *poorly controlled*
- Obstructive Sleep Apnea-*with or without C-PAP machine*
- Optic Neuritis *recurrent*
- Osteoporosis *with history or high risk for stress fracture*
- Pancreatitis *chronic*
- Parkinson's Disease
- Psychosis
- Psychiatric Hospitalization *within a year*
- Pyelonephritis *chronic*
- Reiter's Syndrome-*chronic*
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Sarcoidosis
- Schizophrenia
- Thrombophlebitis-*recurrent*
- Ulcerative Colitis
- Uveitis-*chronic*
- Ventricular Shunt *for hydrocephalus*

If an applicant is currently dealing with any of the following conditions, his/her invitation to the Peace Corps will be deferred until the condition is resolved. The length of the deferral period varies according to the individual case.

- Abnormal Pap Smear requiring current treatment
- Allergies requiring desensitization injections
- Anemia (*cause must be identified*)
- Cataracts requiring surgery
- Endometriosis
- Inguinal Hernia
- Internal Hemorrhoids
- Kidney or Bladder Infections
- Orthodontic Braces (*excluding bite-plate*)
- Ovarian Cyst
- Uterine Fibroids, *symptomatic*
- Cancer – 3 years cancer-free; no deferral for most skin cancers and carcinoma-in-situ
- Coronary artery bypass surgery or angioplasty – 6 months symptom free, no medications, normal stress test
- Cystic Acne-Accutane treatment – 2 months after completion of therapy
- Gastritis, Esophagitis, Peptic or Duodenal Ulcer – minimum of 6 months well controlled, non-smoker
- Glaucoma – 3 months well controlled with medications or 6 months after surgical treatment
- Herniated Disc – minimum of 2 years symptom free
- Herpes Keratitis (eye) – 2 years inactive
- High Blood Pressure – 3 months well controlled under treatment; weight within medically recommended range
- Joint or Back Disorders must be stable or mild; weight within medically recommended range
- Joint Replacement (hip, knee, shoulder) or arthroscopy – 1 year
- Ligament Reconstruction (knee, ankle, shoulder) or arthroscopy – 1 year
- Myocardial Infarction (heart attack) – 12 months symptom free, not on medication, normal stress test
- Seizure Disorder – minimum of 1 year seizure free
- Stroke – 2 years symptom free, not on medication
- Some Psychological Conditions
- Alcoholism, Substance Addiction – minimum of 3 years for alcoholism, minimum of 5 years for substance abuse

Note that you cannot be invited to a Peace Corps program until you have completed the medical review process. Please complete your evaluations as quickly as possible.

Receipt of a medical and dental clearance is based on your medical and dental status **at that time**. *If, after your clearance, you become ill, undergo surgery, add to or change medications, undergo therapy or treatment, or develop any condition for which you seek medical assistance; please notify us immediately.* Any significant change in your health status may impact on your medical/dental clearance. **Failure to disclose such information may seriously affect your health overseas, as well as your status as a Peace Corps Trainee/Volunteer.** For further information, you may call the Office of Medical Services, at 1-800-424-8580 ext. 1500, from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Monday – Friday (Eastern Time).

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