

## Coping with Culture Shock

Most foreigners living overseas experience a degree of culture shock. This form of psychological stress affects even experienced long-term travellers and occurs when familiar cues and patterns are no longer present. It is important to recognize the symptoms of culture shock, which may be fleeting or last several months. Some of the symptoms are irritability, sleepiness, apathy, depression, compulsive eating, excessive drinking, negative stereotyping of the local people and recurring minor illnesses. For suggestions on how to ease the adjustment process, consult the Consular Services publication *Working Abroad* or "Coping with Culture Shock" in the "While Abroad" section at [www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca).

## Long-term travel

If you're travelling over a long period, your health concerns will be a bit different from those of the short-term traveller. You'll be more exposed to potential disease risks and you may have to take preventive medication, such as anti-malarial drugs, for a longer time. You'll need to learn how to shop for and prepare food safely in your new location, and you may need access to health care services for yourself and other family members.

A pre-departure health assessment will document all issues that might affect the health of each family member. This assessment could include check-ups with the optometrist and dentist, as well as a psychological assessment to help you prepare for a new culture or a new job.

You'll need adequate medical coverage that includes health and dental care for the length of your foreign stay. You may also want to consider getting enhanced life and disability insurance. Before you leave home, it's wise to inform your health care providers, including