



The Coastal Challenge Medical Review 2013

The Coastal Challenge promises to be an exciting event for everyone involved. For the race director, race organizers and race staff, the most important mission is ensuring the well being of the participants.

While every possible means will be taken to ensure the health and safety of participants, it is essential that each potential participant honestly assess their capabilities and level of conditioning before the event and heed their bodies' signs and signals during the event.

Pura Vida!

-The Coastal Challenge Staff

Medical Support/Services

Year after year our medical team will consist of experienced physicians, nurses, podiatrists, massage and athletic therapists from the United States and Canada, as well as the help of local Emergency Medical Services who will be providing ambulances and ambulance personnel. Our goal is to help each and every racer finish the race safely.

The medical staff plays a supportive role but they are also responsible for closely observing the condition of each competitor when appropriate. Please do not hesitate to inform them of anything unusual that you may notice as you test your body's limits throughout the week.

The medical staff or race staff may request that a racer discontinue if it's clearly the case that continuing could potentially pose a serious health risk. This may simply mean a delay for observation or you may be advised to discontinue. If appropriate we may also suggest that you consider the shorter and less rigorous course category but either way you will most likely be able to continue to race when/if any medical risk passes.

Both the medical staff and race staff reserve the right to pull anyone off the course for medical evaluation if it is determined that, by continuing, these individuals may pose a danger to themselves.

Medical Considerations

Due to the nature of the event, any potential participant should consult with their physician. This is absolutely essential for anyone with cardiac, pulmonary, neurological, immunological or musculoskeletal disease or any chronic medical condition.

If you take any medications on a regular basis either over the counter or prescribed by your physician, it is important to bring enough with you for the duration of the event and extra in case you experience a delay in your travel home. While most over the counter medications including acetaminophen (Tylenol, etc.) and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (Motrin, etc.) drugs are available in Costa Rica, it is recommended that you bring them with you. **It is also important that you notify our medical staff of any medications you may be taking or any allergies you may have to medications.**

There are several health considerations important for every participant in the event:

Endemic Diseases

Endemic diseases **HAVE NEVER** been an issue in previous Coastal Challenge's and we have never had anyone report that they've developed any of these afflictions post-event. However, these diseases do exist in tropical countries and therefore can also be found in Costa Rica. Endemic diseases include cholera, dengue fever, hepatitis, leptospirosis, malaria, rabies, yellow fever, and several others. Risk of acquiring these diseases may be reduced with a combination of vaccines, prophylaxis, and behavior modification. Consult your physician to determine your risk and the best method of prevention for you. The CDC web site and books dedicated to international travel health are both good resources.

Foot Care

Perhaps the most common health problem during this type of event is foot problems, including blisters. While usually not serious, blisters may cause significant discomfort to the point that a participant will be unable to continue. For this reason, it is important to practice good foot care prior to and during the event. Please refer to the document dedicated to Foot Care.

During the race, we will be encouraging all racers to be responsible for the health of their own feet. There will be self-serve foot care stations at the end of each leg with a member of the medical team available for education, advice and to deal with complicated foot care issues. **All participants should bring their own basic foot care supplies with them. (clean needles, gauze, tape, moleskin) and we will have additional items on hand for more serious foot care issues.**

Heat Illness and Dehydration

Individuals who are not well conditioned traveling in hot, humid environments are susceptible to both heat illness and dehydration. Heat illness includes both very benign conditions such as heat rash as well as life threatening conditions including heat stroke. Participants should carry enough liquids to ensure hydration during the event. It is important to eat and drink appropriate amounts of liquids with electrolytes during the event to reduce the incidence of hyponatremia. Water has not been an issue in previous Coastal Challenge's, however, this year portions of the race will be through agricultural areas that will require purification before drinking.

Plants and Animals

There are 135 species of snakes in Costa Rica with 17 being considered dangerous. Mostly these are members of the Viper, Coral and Boa families. The best prevention is watching your path and being aware.

Water Safety

While the water in Costa Rica is generally considered among the safest in Central America, traveler's diarrhea does occur. It is advised that any water be treated prior to drinking unless its safety can be guaranteed. Speak to your Family Physician about treatment issues (Pepto Bismol, Antibiotics, etc.)

Sun

February is considered the dry season so expect warm temperatures with average highs of 20-25C/70-85C depending on altitude. Furthermore the race will be going through some of the driest areas of Costa Rica. Proper sunscreen is essential (SPF 15 or greater) with enough to last multiple daily applications for the entire race.

Medical Care in Costa Rica

Medical care in Costa Rica is often considered the best in Central America and in many cases up to US standards. It is important to be aware that the event takes place in a relatively remote area of Costa Rica and transportation to a medical facility may be prolonged.

We anticipate a great race and an amazing experience at The Coastal Challenge 2013. On behalf of the medical team I wish you all the best. Please feel free to contact us if you have any specific questions or concerns.

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