



Service. Healing. Transformation.

Attending a Medical Mission to the DR as a Family and as a Minor (*under 21*)

Requirements for Minors on Medical Missions

- **The minimum age for a child to attend a medical mission is 16 years old in the Dominican Republic until the Surgery Center is fully open in 2024.** Exceptions may be made on case-by-case basis; please email medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org if seeking an exception. A trip with a child under 10 tends to be more of an *experiential learning trip* for the child and the supervising adult.
- One the Surgery Center is fully open, the minimum recommended age for a child to attend a medical mission is 5 years old. We have found that the ideal age for a child and supervising adult (non-clinical parent) to fully experience the mission as a service trip is 10 years and older. A trip with a child under 10 tends to be more of an experiential learning trip for the child and the supervising adult.
- **Children under 13 must be accompanied by a nonclinical adult at all times during the mission.** This includes when walking around the site, in the surgery center, and when participating in workstations and other activities. In the past, families have brought a grandmother, a cousin, or family friend to help supervise younger children. Sometimes, two or more families will attend a medical mission together. This enables the nonclinical adults to fully participate in the service aspect of the trip and experience the workstations and roles with minimum age requirements. **One World Surgery staff and other medical mission volunteers are not able to supervise your children.**
- **Children under 18 must attend the mission with a parent or another adult guardian who will assume responsibility for the child and accompany them for the entire duration of travel.** This includes traveling on the same international and domestic flights.
- **Volunteers under 21 who are not traveling with their parent or legal guardian to Honduras must complete the “Permission to Travel in a Foreign Country” letter.** It must be signed and notarized by all legal guardians who are not traveling with the individual. A template letter can be found in the Dominican Republic informational packet on our [website](#).



Service. Healing. Transformation.

Travel and Accommodations

- Rooms in the visitor center can accommodate 4-8+ family members in a room. We make every attempt to house family members in the same room; please express roommate preferences in the online application. **Children under 13 are required to share a room with their parent or guardian.**
- One World Surgery provides 3 meals a day. The meals typically consist of Dominican Republic food (rice, beans, tortillas, soup) and Italian meals. We always have peanut butter and jelly and snacks on hand, but if your child is a picky eater or has allergies or dietary restrictions, we recommend bringing some additional food items from home. There is a refrigerator to store items and a microwave, stove, and oven to prepare any items you bring.

Preparing Your Child for a Medical Mission

- Review the Code of Conduct, Media Policies, and Safety Policies in the informational packet with your child prior to departure. You are responsible for ensuring that your child complies with these policies during the trip.
- Set the expectation that this is a service trip and not a vacation. Your child should be prepared to work hard and to sometimes help with tasks that may not seem interesting or fun in order to contribute to the team.
- Review the [One World Surgery](#) website and watch some of our [videos](#). Help your child to visualize where he/she will be going. Review the General Volunteer packet and volunteer and workstations with your child.
- Share some information about Dominican Republic and global health. Encourage older children to do their own online research. Look for Dominican Republic on the map, and investigate its history, geography, food, culture, general statistics, etc.
- If your child is not used to trying new foods, start to introduce them at home. Rice, beans, and pork are staples of Dominican Republic cuisine and a good place to start if there isn't a Dominican restaurant in your area.
- Attend the pre-trip call 2-4 weeks before your trip with your child. Recap the call with your child and talk through the general volunteer workstations they may find interesting.
- Try learning a few words or phrases in Spanish. Some common Spanish phrases can be found at the end of our Trip Informational Packet located on our [website](#).



Service. Healing. Transformation.

- Depending on your child's age, some of the questions below might be helpful for guiding discussion prior to the trip.
 - Where are you going, and how might it be different from home?
 - Why did your family decide to participate in this trip?
 - What are some things you might do or see on the trip?
 - What is a service trip or medical mission? Why does your family think it's important to participate in service activities?
 - Do you know anyone who has had surgery? What do you think the experience was like for that person?
 - How will your child be expected to behave?

During the Mission

- All minors will participate as general volunteers, rotating through jobs and activities. In most cases, volunteers sign up for the next day's shifts around dinner time. Depending on your mission, shifts in the surgery center, primary care clinic, NPH grounds, and out in the community bateys may be available.
- For safety reasons, some volunteer stations have a minimum age requirement:

Roles	Age Requirement
OR Turnover	13 and up
Instrument Helper	18 and up
Surgery Observer	15 and up
Scrub into Surgery	18 and up
Clinic Kitchen helper and meal server	13 and up
Laundry Assistant	13 and up
Dental Clinic helper	15 and up
Photographer	15 and up
Organize medical files	13 and up
Clinic Scribe	15 and up
Community Health Project volunteer	14 and up

- There are a number of assignments that children of all ages can participate in, under the supervision of an adult:
 - Trash helper
 - Moscati kitchen helper
 - NPH Ranch Kitchen helper
 - Garden and Farm activities
 - Playtime with the NPH children



Service. Healing. Transformation.

- Children are required to stay in their assigned workstation for the entire duration of their shift (morning or afternoon), they cannot walk around between workstations until their shift time is complete.
- If you don't feel comfortable with your child 13 or older walking between workstations (with other participants), please arrange to meet them before and after workstation shifts.
- If you'd like to play with the NPH children in the afternoon, first check with the One World Surgery Hospitality team to confirm it's an appropriate time. Please be aware that it may not always be appropriate because the kids may have schoolwork or chores.
- Help your child to reflect on his/her experience. In the past, some parents have asked their child to journal each day of the trip.
- We encourage you to bring games, books, etc. to help keep younger children occupied during downtimes. We will have some materials and sports equipment available onsite.
- Evening programming occasionally goes as late as 9 pm. You are welcome to excuse yourself after the meal if your child is ready for bed.

Observing and Scrubbing into Surgeries

- One World Surgery prides itself on providing U.S. level surgical care in a developing country setting, adhering to U.S. standards whenever possible. For this reason, our policy is that an individual must be at least 15 years old to observe surgery and at least 18 years old to scrub in on a surgery. Certain surgical specialties require prior medical experience for scrubbing and may have additional rules about leaving/entering the OR during surgery.
- Observation shifts will be assigned by One World Surgery staff, and it will not be possible for any volunteer to spend the entire mission observing and/or scrubbing into surgeries. We require volunteers to observe one full surgery before signing up to scrub in.
- **If you are a clinical parent in the OR, please do not attempt to circumvent these policies in order to give your child a 'good learning experience'.** We value giving the best possible care to our patients, regardless of nationality, social background, resources, or status, and we are unable to uphold this value when patient safety is put at risk. **If you see something in the OR that doesn't feel quite right, SAY SOMETHING.** It's everyone's responsibility to ensure our patients receive safe, high-quality care.



Service. Healing. Transformation.

Other Information

- One World Surgery will gladly provide documentation of service hours for your child's school. Please send any forms that need to be completed and signed to medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org.