

6 BEYOND OUR BORDERS

The 'Beyond our Borders' column focuses on selected and current international diseases that may affect South Africans travelling abroad. Numbers correspond to Figure 4 on page 9.

1. Avian influenza A (H7N9 and H5N6) - China

On 5 July 2016, one fatal case caused by H7N9 influenza was reported in northeast China. A 67-year-old man had become feverish after he butchered a chicken at his home; he was admitted to hospital shortly afterwards and deteriorated.

China has reported 11 laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H7N9) virus this year, including one cluster, on 25 June 2016. Poultry and environmental samples collected from live birds from different settings have tested positive for H7N9 since January 2015 to April 2016. The H7N9 infection has become enzootic in mainland China but potential for human-to-human spread remains low. One laboratory-confirmed case of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N6) was reported to WHO on 30 May 2016. No human-to-human transmission is documented. WHO advise that travellers to countries where outbreaks have been reported should avoid contact with live poultry markets, poultry farms, contact with surfaces that may be contaminated with animal faeces, or entering poultry slaughter areas.

2. MERS-CoV – Saudi Arabia

As of 22 Jul 2016, Saudi Arabia has reported a total of 1440 laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS-CoV infection, including 606 deaths (reported case fatality rate 42.1%). To date, 829 persons have recovered. There are currently 5 active cases. People should avoid contact with camels and camel products, such as drinking raw milk or urine of camels or eating meat that was not cooked properly.

3. Diphtheria – India and Malaysia

India: Between 15 June to 12 July, 2 fatal cases and 32 confirmed cases were identified. In

Malaysia and as of 6 July 2016, there have been 14 confirmed cases of diphtheria. Prevention of diphtheria is achieved through vaccination.

4. Japanese encephalitis – Vietnam

Between 23 June to 1 July 2016, 9 cases were confirmed in the Vietnamese city of Hanoi.

5. Measles – New Zealand, USA and UK

Both the UK and the USA have issued warnings about potential measles outbreaks. In both countries isolated cases have escalated into clusters, apparently amongst people refusing vaccination. In the UK, in the south Devon town of Totnes, 15 children at a high school were diagnosed with confirmed measles. In the USA, a cluster of cases in a detention centre has been linked to officials who refused to show proof of vaccination. In New Zealand, since April 2016, 60 confirmed measles cases were reported, mostly linked to the town of Hamilton. Residents and visitors to the area are urged to ensure that they are fully immunised against measles.

6. Ebola – Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone

There continue to be no further reported cases of Ebola in these three countries. Sierra Leone issued a request that persons continue to notify the authorities of all deaths, and that deaths meeting certain criteria will continue to be tested.

7. Yellow fever – see zoonotic and vector-borne diseases section

8. Zika virus – see zoonotic and vector-borne diseases section

Source: Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, NICD-NHLS



Figure 4. Current outbreaks that may have implications for travellers. Number correspond to text above. The red dot is the approximate location of the outbreak or event