

7 BEYOND OUR BORDERS

The 'Beyond our Borders' column focuses on selected and current international diseases that may affect South Africans travelling abroad.

Disease & countries	Comments	Advice to travellers	
1. Water- and food-borne diseases			
Cholera			
Mozambique	Mozambique has reported 5 118 cases and 43 deaths as of 05 March 2015.	<p>The cholera outbreak in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi is of particular concern given the number of persons travelling between South Africa and these countries.</p> <p>Cholera is an acute diarrhoea illness that causes severe dehydration. Drink lots of safe water (bottled water with an unbroken seal, boiled water or water treated with chlorine tablets). Strict washing of hands with soap and safe water must be practiced. Food must be well-cooked before eating. Peel fruit and vegetables before eating.</p>	
Malawi	Malawi has reported a total of 60 cases and 2 deaths as of 05 March 2015.		
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe has reported a total of 11 cases and no deaths as of 05 March 2015.		
Congo DR	In the first 7 weeks of 2015, Congo DR reported 1 520 cases and 35 deaths.		
Kenya	Kenya has reported about 1 500 cases and 30 deaths as of 14 March 2015.		
2. Vector-borne diseases			
Dengue fever			
Africa			
Mozambique	On 16 March 2015, the Health Ministry confirmed an outbreak of dengue fever in the northern province of Nampula. A total of 110 cases was reported, with no deaths.	<p>Dengue fever (like chikungunya) is a mosquito-borne viral infection transmitted by <i>Aedes</i> spp. mosquitoes, which bite mostly during the day. Travellers should take care to prevent mosquito bites; preventive measures include the use of insect repellent, wearing long-sleeved clothing and long trousers, using mosquito bed nets and sleeping in an air-conditioned room.</p>	
Asia			
Thailand	As of 08 March, more than 3 700 cases and 3 deaths have been recorded since 01 January 2015.		
Malaysia	A higher number of dengue fever cases (58% increase) has been reported for the year-to-date compared to the same period last year.		

Disease & countries	Comments	Advice to travellers
2. Vector-borne diseases (continued)		
Philippines Borneo (Sarawak)	Cases continue to be reported in the Philippines and Sarawak in Borneo, indicating ongoing transmission.	Dengue fever (like chikungunya) is a mosquito-borne viral infection transmitted by <i>Aedes</i> spp. mosquitoes, which bite mostly during the day. Travellers should take care to prevent mosquito bites; preventive measures include the use of insect repellent, wearing long-sleeved clothing and long trousers, using mosquito bed nets and sleeping in an air-conditioned room.
Pacific		
Australia	As of 10 March 2015, 50 cases have been reported, mostly from the municipalities of Cairns, Tully, Innisfail and El Arish.	
Fiji	As of 17 March 2015, 382 cases have been reported.	
3. Respiratory diseases		
Avian influenza		
China (H7N9)	As of 09 March 2015, China has reported 59 new cases since 19 January 2015. This brings the cumulative total of cases to 677 cases and 61 fatalities to date.	Travellers need to avoid contact with birds including poultry. They must avoid touching surfaces contaminated with bird droppings and they must only eat meat that is thoroughly cooked.
MERS-CoV		
Saudi Arabia	Between 03 and 10 March 2015 an additional 15 cases including 5 deaths were notified to the World Health Organization (WHO).	Good hygiene and basic infection prevention measures should be practiced. Travellers with diabetes, chronic lung disease and immune-compromised states are at risk of infection and should avoid contact with animals if possible. Strict hand washing must be followed after touching animals. Avoid raw camel milk or undercooked camel meat at all times. Travellers should avoid contact with animals and eat food that is fully cooked.
Qatar	On 09 March 2015, Qatar reported one new case to WHO.	
Germany	On 07 March 2015, Germany notified WHO of an imported case ex-United Arab Emirates.	

References and additional reading:ProMED-Mail (www.promedmail.org)World Health Organization (www.who.int)Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

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