

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. Respiratory diseases		
MERS-CoV		
Saudi Arabia	As of 12 Aug 2015 there was a total of 1,086 laboratory confirmed cases including 474 deaths and 24 persons with currently illness. This includes 4 new cases, 1 death since the last update.	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. Infection control practices such as regular hand washing must be followed to prevent infection.
South Korea	As of 13 Aug 2015 the epidemic is under control. There have been no new cases, nor fatalities.	
H5N1 avian influenza		
Nigeria	The National Veterinary Research Institute reported that new cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza [HPAI] (bird flu) have been discovered in Abia and Enugu states on Tue 11 Aug 2015. The previous cases were eliminated in May 2015, after destroying more than 1.4 million birds.	At this time, it is not recommended that the general public avoid travel to any of the countries where there is avian influenza in poultry or other birds.
2. Water-borne disease		
Cholera		
Kenya	Kenya has reported a total of 3,223 acute cases of cholera and 72 deaths as of 9 June 2015. Tanzania has reported a total of 4,487 suspected cases of cholera as of 28 May 2015. Haiti has reported a total of 15,000 cases of cholera and 126 deaths since the beginning of 2015.	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.
Tanzania		
Haiti		
3. Vector-borne diseases		
Dengue fever		
Taiwan	Taiwan report from 28 Jul - 3 Aug 2015, 124 cases of which 114 locally acquired; Tainan 330 cases since May 2015, 102 new cases in the last week.	Dengue fever (like chikungunya) is a mosquito-borne viral infection transmitted by <i>Aedes</i> spp. mosquitoes, which bite mostly during the day. Travellers can protect themselves from dengue fever by preventing mosquito bites by using insect repellent and sleeping in an air conditioned room. Mosquito nets are useful for those sleeping in an area that is exposed to the outdoors.
Ecuador	Ecuador has reported a total of 20,800 cases since the beginning of 2015	

7 BEYOND OUR BORDERS

Disease & countries	Comments	Advice to travellers
3. Vector-borne diseases cont.		
Chikungunya		
Hondurus	60,741 cases by 24 Jul 2015	Chikungunya is a mosquito-borne viral infection transmitted by <i>Aedes</i> spp. mosquitoes, which bite mostly during the day. The most common symptoms of chikungunya virus infection are fever and joint pain. Other symptoms may include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash. Since its discovery in Tanganyika, Africa, in 1952, chikungunya virus outbreaks have occurred occasionally in Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, but recent outbreaks have spread the disease over a wider range. Outbreaks have occurred in countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In late 2013 chikungunya virus was found for the first time in the Americas on islands in the Caribbean and in Mexico the virus was reported at the beginning of 2014. Travellers should wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants during the day and stay in well-ventilated (fan/air-conditioned) rooms.
Mexico	3,306 cases and 0 deaths by 7 Aug 2015	
USA	265 cases by 7 Aug 2015	
French Guiana	1,756 confirmed local cases with 2 deaths by 31 Jul 2015	
Puerto Rico	105 confirmed local cases with 14 deaths by 24 Jul 2015	
Colombia	11,963 cases with 37 deaths by 24 Jul 2015	
Ecuador	27,364 cases by 7 Aug 2015	
Yellow fever Brazil	Brazil (Goiaras) has reported a total of 4 cases of yellow fever to date. The last outbreak in Brazil was in 2008 where 17 people were infected and 10 died.	Yellow fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes. The "yellow" in the name refers to the jaundice that affects some patients. Vaccination is the most important preventive measure against yellow fever. The vaccine is safe, affordable and highly effective, and a single dose of yellow fever vaccine is sufficient to confer sustained immunity and life-long protection against yellow fever disease and a booster dose of yellow fever vaccine is not needed. The vaccine provides effective immunity within 30 days for 99% of persons vaccinated.
<i>Yersinia Pestis</i> (Plague)	Two cases have been diagnosed in the USA this year, both amongst residents of New Mexico. Seven cases in animals have been identified, including two in squirrels at Yosemite National Park.	Bubonic plague typically presents with fever, delium and 'buboes' - or enlarged, pus-filled glands in the groin, armpits or neck—usually at a site closest to a bite by an infected flea, (<i>Xenopsylla cheopis</i>). The risk to humans remains low, but residents in affected areas have been advised to keep their pets free from fleas. Campsites in Yosemite were closed to allow health officials to spray insecticides into rodent holes.

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