

## 6 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
<b>1. Vector-borne diseases</b>		
<b>Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever</b> Pakistan (National)  India (Gujarat)	As of 15 December 2014: 19 confirmed cases, 6 deaths  As of 15 December 2014: 2 cases, 1 death	Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever is transmitted to people from ticks and livestock animals. Human-to-human transmission can occur from contact with blood and body fluids of infected persons. Avoid tick bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and light-coloured clothing to deter ticks.
<b>Chikungunya</b> French Polynesia (American Samoa Samoa Tokelau, Tahiti, Moorea)  North America Mexico USA  Central America El Salvador Honduras Nicaragua Panama Costa Rica Guatemala  Caribbean On-going local transmission  Andean Venezuela Colombia Bolivia  Southern Cone Chile	As of 14 December 2014: 35 000 cases reported, 4 deaths  As of 14 December 2014: 87 cases, 0 deaths 1911 cases, 0 deaths  As of 05 December 2014: 157 cases, 0 deaths 14 cases, 0 deaths 582 cases, 0 deaths 70 cases, 0 deaths 18 cases, 0 deaths 49 cases, 0 deaths  As of 05 December 2014: 7 900 cases, 138 deaths across 5 Latin Caribbean countries and 705 cases, 0 deaths across 6 non- Latin Caribbean countries  As of 14 December 2014: 1 974 cases, 0 deaths 403 cases, 3 deaths 4 cases, 0 deaths  As of 14 December 2014: 14 cases, 0 deaths	

Disease & countries	Comments	Advice to travellers
<b>1. Vector-borne diseases (continued)</b>		
<p><b>Dengue fever</b></p> <p>Philippines (National)</p> <p>China (Guangdong Province)</p> <p>Taiwan (National)</p> <p>Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City)</p> <p>Malaysia (National)</p> <p>India (National)</p> <p>Sri Lanka (National)</p> <p>Pakistan (National)</p> <p>Saudi Arabia (National)</p> <p>Sudan (National)</p> <p>Americas (Mexico, Honduras, Columbia, Brazil, Venezuela, Cayman islands)</p>	<p>As of 05 November 2014: &gt;3 815 cases, 288 deaths</p> <p>As of 03 November 2014: 41 155 cases</p> <p>As of 25 November 2014: 13 030 cases, 16 deaths</p> <p>As of 06 November 2014: 3 150 cases, 0 deaths</p> <p>As of 04 November 2014: 84 684 cases, 160 deaths</p> <p>As of 15 December 2014: 8 348 cases, 72 deaths</p> <p>As of 12 November 2014: 36 600 cases, 0 deaths</p> <p>As of 26 November 2014: 2 092 cases, 0 deaths</p> <p>As of 26 November 2014: &gt;50 cases</p> <p>As of 14 November 2014: 15 cases</p> <p>On-going local transmission</p>	<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 wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants during the day and stay in well-ventilated (fan/air-conditioned) rooms.</p>
<p><b>Lassa fever</b></p> <p>Benin (Atalcora)</p>	<p>As of 05 December 2014: 2 cases, 2 deaths</p>	<p>The host of Lassa virus is the multimammate rat of the genus <i>Mastomys</i>. The virus is transmitted through direct contact with the rodent's urine, droppings, blood or organs. Lassa virus may also spread from person-to-person through contact with the virus in the blood, tissue, secretions, or excretions of an individual infected with the Lassa virus. Travellers should avoid contact with <i>Mastomys</i> rodents and must ensure good hygiene when caring for sick friends or relatives.</p>

Disease & countries	Comments	Advice to travellers
<b>1. Vector-borne diseases (continued)</b>		
<b>Plague</b> Madagascar (National)	As of 21 November 2014: 119 cases, 40 deaths	The plague bacterium ( <i>Yersinia pestis</i> ) is transmitted by fleas that are found in wild rodents. Plague can also infect humans and their pets. You can get plague from being bitten by infected fleas, touching or skinning infected animals (such as prairie dogs, squirrels, rats, and rabbits) or by inhaling droplets from the cough of an infected person or animal (especially sick cats). Travellers should use an insect repellent that contains DEET to prevent flea bites if they are exposed to animals or rodents with fleas.
<b>2. Water– and food-borne diseases</b>		
<b>Cholera</b> Haiti	As of 26 November 2014: 15 000 cases, 132 deaths	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.
Dominican Republic (San Juan Province)	As of 27 November 2014: 13 cases, 0 deaths	
<b>3. Respiratory diseases</b>		
<b>MERS-CoV</b> Saudi Arabia	As of the 16 December 2014: 821 laboratory-confirmed cases and 355 deaths.	<p>Good hygiene and basic infection prevention practices can minimise risk of respiratory infections in travellers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cough etiquette</li> <li>• avoiding contact with sick people</li> <li>• avoid handling of animals</li> <li>• frequent hand washing with soap and water or the use of an alcohol-based hand rub.</li> </ul> <p>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.</p>

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

Last accessed: 17 December 2014

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