

## 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. <u>Vector-borne diseases</u></b>		
<b><u>Chikungunya</u></b> Caribbean Basin	St Martin Island: 50 confirmed cases. Local transmission confirmed on St Martin, Martinique, St Barthelemy, Guadeloupe, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Anguille & French Guyana. As of 15 March 2014, there have been more than 15 000 probable and confirmed cases in the region, including 5 fatalities.	Chikungunya, dengue fever and Zika virus infection are mosquito-borne viral infections 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 where possible; use mosquito repellents containing DEET to avoid being bitten.
<b><u>Dengue fever</u></b> <u>Africa:</u> Mauritius	As at 22 March 2014, 26 cases were reported; most cases (23) in Triolet locality.	
<u>Asia:</u> Malaysia	As at 5 March 2014, 18 165 cases reported; 64% of cases in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.	
Pakistan	127 cases since 1 January 2014; most affected area is Karachi, with 120 cases.	
<u>Pacific:</u> Cook Islands, Fiji	Ongoing transmission; cases continue to be reported.	
<u>Americas: Central</u> El Salvador Honduras Panama <u>South America</u> Bolivia, Peru	Ongoing transmission; cases continue to be reported.	
Brazil	Sao Paulo: as at 06 March 2014, 804 cases were reported.	
<b><u>Zika Virus</u></b> <u>Pacific:</u> French Polynesia  New Caledonia Easter Island	The outbreak began in October 2013 in French Polynesia; estimates of >30 000 cases to date.  Zika virus continues to spread to new areas in the Pacific, most recently Easter Island.	

Disease & countries	Comments	Advice to travellers
<b>2. <u>Water- and food-borne diseases</u></b>		
<b><u>Cholera</u></b> Africa: Namibia	As of 04 March 2014, 554 cases including 18 deaths had been reported. The outbreak started in November 2013.	Drink and use safe water (bottled water with an unbroken seal, boiled water or water treated with chlorine tablets). Wash hands with soap and safe water often. Eat hot well-cooked food, peel fruits and vegetables. Vaccines offer delayed and incomplete protection and should therefore not be used as a substitute for good hygiene and infection prevention practice.
<b>3. <u>Respiratory viruses</u></b>		
<b><u>Influenza</u></b> Globally	Increased activity in North America (H1N1) and China (H1N1 and H3N2). Activity remains low for the rest of the Northern & Southern hemispheres. In countries of tropical areas variable influenza activity has been reported.	
<b><u>MERS-CoV</u></b> Saudi Arabia	On 20 March 2014, three new cases were reported in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The global total now stands at 204 cases including 85 deaths.	
<b><u>Avian influenza A (H7N9, H5N1 and H9N2 )</u></b>  <u>Cambodia</u> H5N1  <u>China</u> H7N9	Sporadic cases continue to be reported, with 9 cases reported this year to date.  As of 19 March 2014, a total of 385 confirmed cases of human infection have been reported from China, with most cases from Zhejiang, Guangdong and Jiangsu provinces.	Good hygiene and basic infection prevention practices can minimise risk of respiratory infections in travellers: <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> Travellers should contact a medical practitioner if they develop acute respiratory symptoms upon return from a known risk area.
<b><u>Measles</u></b> <u>Africa</u> Democratic Republic of Congo (East and South)  <u>Asia</u> Vietnam, Phillipines  <u>New Zealand</u> Auckland	Outbreaks are ongoing.  Outbreaks are ongoing.  58 cases since 01 January 2014.	

**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))

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