

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
1. <u>Vector-borne diseases</u>		
<u>Chikungunya</u>		
Caribbean (British Virgin Islands)	St Martin Island: 50 confirmed cases; Martinique Island: some cases confirmed, no further information.	Chikungunya and dengue fever are mosquito-borne viral infections transmitted by <i>Aedes</i> spp. mosquitoes, which bite mostly during the day.
Dominica	13 confirmed cases.	
Uganda	A few cases reported, numbers unknown.	
<u>Dengue fever</u>		
<u>Africa</u> : Tanzania (Dar es Salaam)	21 hospitalised cases this year to date.	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.
<u>Asia</u> : Malaysia	835 cases since 01/01/2014.	
Phillipines	23 cases in evacuees displaced by clashes between government and Liberation fighters	
<u>Pacific</u> : Australia (Queensland)	Cairns: 59 cases; Port Douglas: 17 cases and rising.	
Vanuatu (National)	313 confirmed cases with spread to Sano Island and Luganville Town: 71 cases and rising.	
<u>Americas</u> : Costa Rica	791 cases.	
Panama	1 703 cases, including 6 deaths.	

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1. <u>Vector-borne diseases (continued)</u>:		
<u>Hantavirus</u> Panama	9 cases since 01/01/2014.	Hantaviruses that cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) are carried by certain rats and mice. HPS is a severe and sometimes fatal respiratory disease. Coming into contact with rat urine, droppings or saliva can pose a risk of virus transmission. Avoid contact with rodents.
<u>Zika Virus</u> French Polynesia and New Caledonia	Since 03/02/2014: 49 lab confirmed cases in New Caledonia, 30 of whom had a travel history to French Polynesia, where there is an ongoing outbreak.	<p>Zika virus is a viral infection transmitted by <i>Aedes</i> spp. mosquitoes, which bite mostly during the day.</p> <p>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.</p>
<u>Leptospirosis</u> United Kingdom	A 7-year-old boy has died after consuming floodwater possibly contaminated with rat urine. He developed Weil's disease, a severe form of leptospirosis. Sixteen other cases have also been reported, including the boy's father. The situation is as a consequence of current flooding.	Leptospire bacteria are spread through the urine of infected carrier animals, and once in water or soil can survive there for weeks to months. The most important animal reservoirs are rodents and other small animals, but livestock and companion animals may also be infected. Human infection occurs by direct contact with infected urine or animal tissues, or more commonly by indirect exposure to the organisms in damp soil or water. Travellers are advised to avoid travel to flooded areas.
<u>American trypanosomiasis (Chagas' disease)</u> Venezuela	175 cases reported between 12 and 18 January 2014, compared to a total of 4 cases in January 2013.	<i>Trypanosoma cruzi</i> is transmitted to animals and people by various triatomine insects ('kissing bugs'), and is found only in the Americas (predominantly in rural areas of Latin America). Persons travelling in endemic areas should avoid sleeping in dilapidated dwellings, apply insect repellent containing DEET, and use bed nets to avoid being bitten.
<u>Cutaneous leishmaniasis</u> Pakistan	254 cases this year to date.	<i>Leishmania</i> spp. parasites are spread by the bite of phlebotomine sand flies. Avoid outdoor activities, especially from dusk to dawn, when sand flies are generally most active. Minimise the amount of exposed (uncovered) skin, apply insect repellent containing DEET, and use bed nets to avoid being bitten.

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2. <u>Water- and food-borne diseases</u>		
<p><u>Cholera</u> <u>Africa:</u> Namibia (Kunene Region)</p> <p>Nigeria (Benue State)</p> <p><u>Middle East:</u> Iran</p>	<p>As of 05/02/2014, 453 cases including 15 deaths have been reported. The outbreak started in November 2013.</p> <p>The cholera outbreak which began in November 2013 is ongoing. Approximately 30 deaths have been reported to date.</p> <p>170 cases since September 2013, mostly affecting illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries.</p>	<p>Drink and use safe water (bottled water with an unbroken seal, boiled water or water treated with chlorine tablets).</p> <p>Wash hands with soap and safe water often. Eat hot well-cooked food, peel fruits and vegetables.</p> <p>Vaccines offer delayed and incomplete protection and should therefore not be used as a substitute for good hygiene and infection prevention practice.</p>
<p><u>Norovirus</u> Caribbean (cruise ship)</p>	<p>178 passengers and 11 crew members were affected, and the cruise was ended early.</p>	<p>Norovirus is transmitted by contaminated food or water, and person-to-person spread. Outbreaks on cruise ships are well described. Wash your hands carefully with soap and water, especially after using the toilet and changing diapers, and always before eating, preparing, or handling food. Wash fruits and vegetables and cook seafood thoroughly. When you are sick, do not prepare food or care for others who are sick. Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces.</p>
3. <u>Respiratory viruses</u>		
<p><u>Influenza</u> North America</p> <p>China</p> <p>Globally</p>	<p>Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 has been the predominant subtype detected, and seems to be affecting mostly persons aged 20 to 40, i.e. younger age groups than would be expected. Seven deaths have been reported.</p> <p>Activity has been increasing with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2) and influenza B co-circulating.</p> <p>Activity remains low for the rest of the northern hemisphere as well as the southern hemisphere. In countries of tropical areas variable influenza activity has been reported.</p>	<p>Northern hemisphere-formulation influenza vaccines are not available in South Africa.</p>

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3. <u>Respiratory viruses (continued)</u>		
<p><u>MERS-CoV</u> <u>Middle East:</u> Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).</p> <p><u>Europe:</u> France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom</p> <p><u>Africa:</u> Tunisia</p>	<p>Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection was first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Most confirmed cases of MERS-CoV infection developed severe acute respiratory illness.</p> <p>At present, the route of transmission to humans and types of exposures that result in infection are not known.</p> <p>Since September 2012 until 07/02/2014 there have been 182 cases and 79 deaths.</p>	<p>Good hygiene and basic infection prevention practices can minimise risk of respiratory infections in travellers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cough etiquette • avoiding contact with sick people • avoid handling of animals • frequent hand washing with soap and water or the use of an alcohol-based hand rub. <p>Travellers should contact a medical practitioner if they develop acute respiratory symptoms upon return from a known risk area.</p>
<p><u>Avian influenza A</u></p> <p><u>H7N9</u> China</p> <p><u>H5N1</u> China, Canada, Vietnam</p> <p><u>H9N2</u> China</p>	<p>Human cases were first reported in March 2013, and sporadic cases continue to occur. According to WHO, 180 confirmed human cases including 33 deaths have been reported since 01/01/2014. Cases have now been reported in Malaysia and Canada but all had travel history to China. No local spread in either area has been reported. All cases report exposure to poultry</p> <p>From 2003 through 24/01/2014, 650 lab-confirmed human cases of avian influenza A(H5N1) virus infection have been reported from 15 countries. Of these cases, 386 died. Canada has notified one fatal case with history of travel to Beijing. Vietnam has recently reported one fatal case.</p> <p>Two cases reported in Hong Kong and Hunan District</p>	

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

Last accessed: 17 February 2014

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

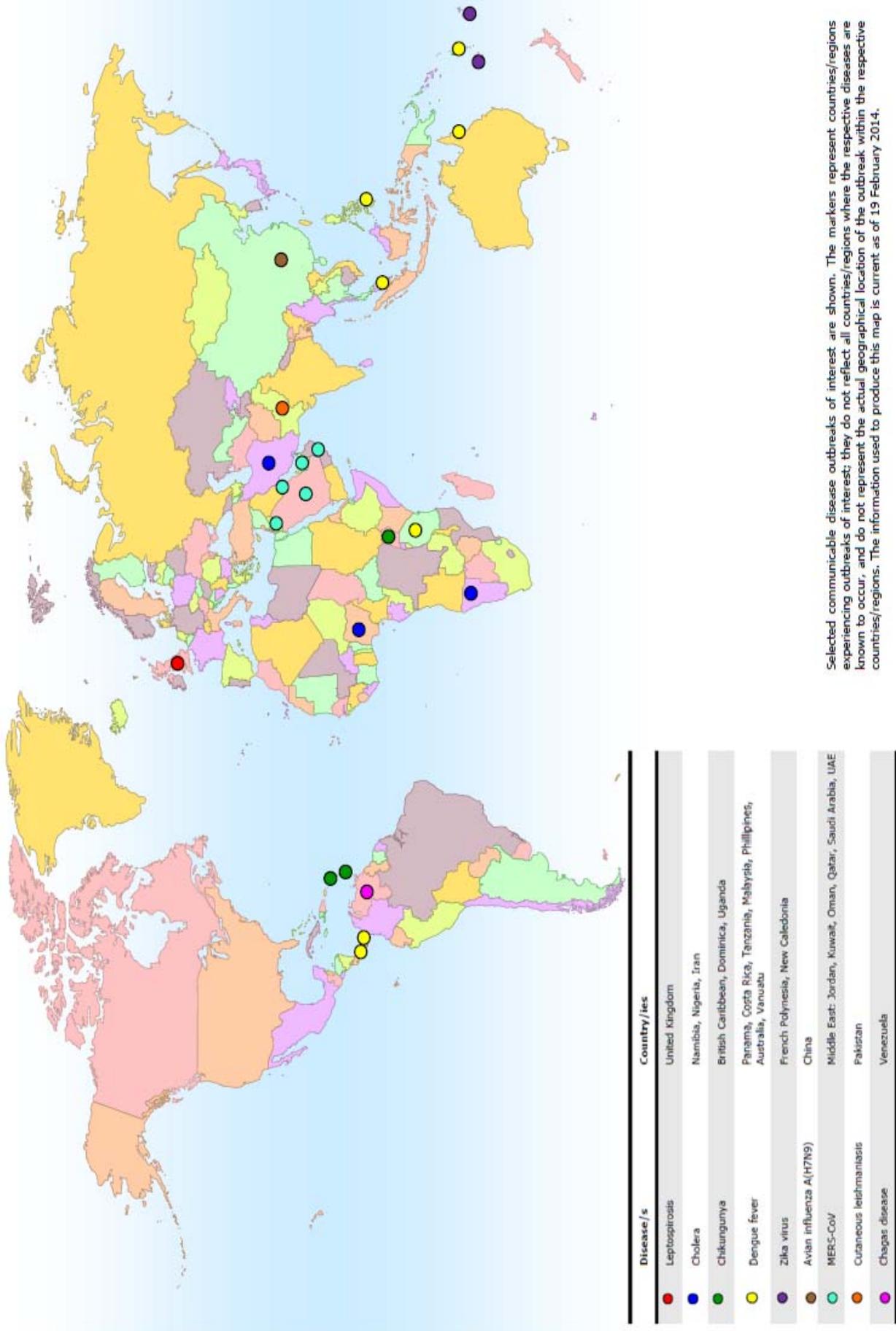


Figure 5. Selected communicable disease outbreaks that may affect South Africans travelling abroad, as at 19 February 2014.