

*Passports, tickets, money?*  
**ARE YOU REALLY READY TO GO?**



A purple shield-shaped graphic with a white border. At the top, there are five circular icons: a liver, a mosquito, a water tap, a hand being washed, and a virus. Below the icons, the text "Travel safely" is written in a white cursive font. Underneath that, a list of diseases is written in a white, bold, sans-serif font: "HEPATITIS A", "YELLOW FEVER", "TYPHOID FEVER", "POLIOMYELITIS", and "TETANUS".

## Healthy Travel

A practical guide with helpful health advice for travellers.



## What is Hepatitis A?

**Hepatitis A is a viral infection that affects the liver.  
It can sometimes be serious.**

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Hepatitis A symptoms can occur two to six weeks after contracting the virus.

**The first sign of infection is having a flu-like condition. The symptoms can then progress and result in:**

- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stomach pains
- Weight loss
- Pale stools and dark urine
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice)
- Occasional skin rash and joint pain

The severity of hepatitis A symptoms vary and may be much more serious in the elderly.

### HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

The hepatitis A virus is found in the stools of people with the infection. Hepatitis A usually spreads through the consumption of contaminated food or drinks or by the handles on toilet doors. The virus is generally absorbed orally, but you can also contract it via contact with an infected person (even if he/she has no symptoms).

Hepatitis A is often associated with Regions where good sanitation is not guaranteed. However, travellers may also become infected during short stays, in any type of accommodation. Food can be contaminated during preparation, even in all-inclusive facilities and hotels with star ratings.

## WHAT IS THE RISK OF CONTRACTING HEPATITIS A?

As with many travel-related diseases, your risk of contracting hepatitis A depends on:

- The Region to which you are travelling
- Sanitation conditions
- The activities you take part in there

## WHICH REGIONS ARE AT RISK FOR HEPATITIS A?

The most at risk Regions are **Africa** (including Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Algeria), **Latin America** and **Asia** (especially India).



## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST HEPATITIS A?

### Good hygiene when it comes to food and water.

Hepatitis A is not the only disease transmitted via water and food. The following steps can therefore help to protect yourself against several travel-related diseases:

- Wash your hands properly after using the bathroom and before each meal
- Only drink bottled, boiled or purified water
- Avoid raw food
- Avoid ice cream, ice cubes and food that has come into contact with ice
- Eat only fruit that can be peeled
- Make sure that hot and well-cooked food is made with fresh products and consumed straight away
- Avoid non-pasteurised dairy products

## CAN HEPATITIS A BE TREATED?

There is no specific treatment for people with a hepatitis A infection. Recovery usually takes one month in healthy young people. Approximately 2% of people with the infection who are over 50 years of age die from hepatitis A.

## VACCINATION

**There are vaccines available for adults and children** aged one year and over.

- One dose of a hepatitis A vaccine offers short-term protection for a single trip
- For long-term protection, it is necessary to receive two doses six to twelve months apart, depending on the vaccine used

## BEFORE DEPARTING

Talk to your General Practitioner or make an appointment at a vaccination centre of your Local Health Unit to assess your risk of contracting hepatitis A and to check your vaccination status.

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For more information before travelling, please visit the dedicated page of the official website of the Ministry of Health:

[www.salute.gov.it](http://www.salute.gov.it)

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References available on page 18.



## What is Yellow Fever?

**Yellow fever is a very serious and potentially fatal viral infection which is transmitted through the bite of certain mosquitoes that are mainly active during the day.**

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The symptoms of yellow fever may occur three to six days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

#### In a first phase, flu-like symptoms appear:

- Headaches
- Muscle pain (mainly in the back)
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) which may intensify.

Most patients begin to feel better or recover completely in three to four days. However, in 15 to 25% of people, the disease will evolve and move into a more serious subsequent phase.

#### Symptoms of this subsequent phase include:

- Fever
- More severe jaundice
- Blood in vomit
- Bleeding of the ears, eyes or mouth
- Kidney failure
- Liver failure

Nearly 50% of patients who experience this subsequent phase die within ten to fourteen days.

### HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

You cannot contract yellow fever by coming into contact with people with the infection, it can only [be contracted] via infected mosquitoes. These mosquitoes may be infected with the yellow fever virus from birth or after biting other humans who are already infected. Unlike many types of mosquitoes that are active between sunset and dawn, yellow fever mosquitoes feed during the day, primarily during the coldest hours, such as just after sunrise or before sunset.

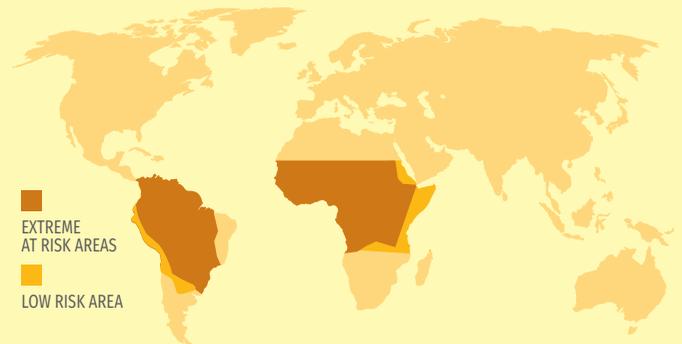
### WHAT IS THE RISK OF CONTRACTING YELLOW FEVER?

As with other travel-related illnesses, your risk of contracting yellow fever depends on:

- The Region to which you are travelling
- The duration of your trip
- The activities you take part in there

### WHICH REGIONS ARE AT RISK FOR YELLOW FEVER?

The most at risk Regions are the tropical areas in **Africa** and **South America**. Some parts of **Central America** and the **Caribbean**, such as **Panama** and **Trinidad**, also have an increased risk. Some countries require proof of vaccination (certificate) before authorising travellers to enter.



### HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST YELLOW FEVER?

**By avoiding mosquito bites.**

If you are travelling in a Region affected by yellow fever, it is important to do everything to avoid getting bitten:

- Avoid areas that have a particularly high concentration of mosquitoes such as swamps, jungles and woods
- Wear loose clothing (mosquitoes are able to bite through tight clothing, even jeans!) and cover your skin as much as possible
- Use a product to repel insects. There are many different repellents available

### CAN YELLOW FEVER BE TREATED?

There is no specific treatment for people with a Yellow fever infection. However, symptoms may be relieved with different treatments which range from taking analgesics to blood transfusions.

### VACCINATION

Vaccination is considered to be the most effective way to prevent yellow fever. It is mandatory for the yellow fever vaccine to be administered and recorded on a certificate in an approved international vaccination centre.

- Following the recommendations of the World Health Organisation in July 2016, it was decided that one dose of the yellow fever vaccine provides lifetime protection.
- A booster dose is recommended for certain at risk groups. Ask for advice from a recognised vaccination centre to assess your risk of contracting yellow fever

### BEFORE DEPARTING

Talk to your General Practitioner or make an appointment at a vaccination centre of your Local Health Unit to assess your risk of contracting yellow fever and to check your vaccination status.

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INFORMATION ON **TYPHOID FEVER**  
FOR THOSE TRAVELLING ABROAD



## What is Typhoid Fever?

**Typhoid fever is a contagious illness caused by certain bacteria from the *Salmonella typhi* group in contaminated food or drink.**

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Typhoid fever symptoms can occur one to three weeks after consuming contaminated food or water.

#### **The first symptoms of typhoid fever may include:**

- Fever
- Abdominal pain
- Dull headache
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea or constipation

#### **As typhoid fever progresses, these symptoms may worsen and you may get other symptoms, including:**

- Exhaustion
- Loss of appetite
- Low heart rate
- Rapid breathing
- Some confusion
- Swollen abdomen

If typhoid fever is not treated, one in every ten people may develop serious complications from the third week, particularly internal bleeding or a ruptured bowel. Complications resulting from untreated typhoid fever can lead to death in 10-20% of cases.

### HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Typhoid fever is generally contracted through the consumption of food or water that is infected with the *Salmonella typhi* bacteria. These bacteria are carried via the faeces (stools) of people with the infection. Food and drinks may therefore be contaminated if

they are handled by a person with typhoid and drinking water may be contaminated due to contact with wastewater. The infection is therefore more common in Regions where the sanitation conditions are not guaranteed.

## WHAT IS THE RISK OF CONTRACTING TYPHOID FEVER?

As with many travel-related illnesses, your risk of contracting typhoid fever depends on:

- The Region to which you are travelling
- The duration of your trip
- The activities you take part in there
- The sanitation conditions there

People who are particularly at risk are those who go on backpacking trips under limited sanitation conditions, and particularly when the trip lasts for more than one month.

## WHICH REGIONS ARE AT RISK FOR TYPHOID FEVER?

**Asia** is the most at risk Region, more specifically **India, Pakistan** and **Bangladesh**. Other at risk Regions include **North Africa** and **Senegal**. The risk is also higher in certain **Latin America** countries (**Chile, Peru, and Mexico**).



## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST TYPHOID FEVER?

**Good hygiene when it comes to food and water.**

Typhoid fever is not the only disease transmitted via water and

food. The following steps can therefore help to protect yourself against several travel-related diseases:

- Wash your hands properly before eating
- Only drink bottled, boiled or purified water
- Avoid ice cream, ice cubes and food that have come into contact with ice
- Avoid raw food
- Eat only fruit that can be peeled
- Make sure that hot and well-cooked food is made with fresh products and consumed straight away
- Avoid non-pasteurised dairy products

## CAN TYPHOID FEVER BE TREATED?

Typhoid fever can be treated with antibiotics over the course of seven to fourteen days. However, complete recovery may take several weeks. This recovery period may vary depending on how quickly the illness was diagnosed and treated.

## VACCINATION

**There are two commercially available vaccines:**

- Live attenuated vaccine given orally in three doses every other day, indicated from an age of 5 years
- Capsular polysaccharide vaccine (Vi antigen) given intramuscularly in one single dose, indicated from an age of 2 years

## BEFORE DEPARTING

Talk to your General Practitioner or make an appointment at a vaccination center of your Local Health Unit to assess your risk of contracting typhoid fever and to check your vaccination status.

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References available on page 18.



## What is Poliomyelitis?

**Poliomyelitis, or polio, is a highly infectious disease that can cause severe or irreversible paralysis (use of crutches or inability to walk) and death.**

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Individuals do not often show clinical signs of infection (the disease is often asymptomatic).

- Fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Fatigue
- Vomiting
- Joint pain

**As Polio progresses, symptoms may worsen until reaching a state of paralysis** (1 in 200 people with Polio remain permanently paralysed).

### HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Polio is highly contagious. It is spread through the ingestion of infected stool particles (as the result of poor hygiene practices) and, less often, through contaminated food and water. It may also be spread through infected saliva particles from sick people or healthy carriers.

### WHAT IS THE RISK OF CONTRACTING POLIOMYELITIS?

The risk of contracting polio is increased by the fact that an infected person is less likely to develop clear, visible symptoms. This can cause the chain of infection to spread rapidly, especially in the absence of adequate sanitation.

### WHICH REGIONS ARE AT RISK FOR POLIOMYELITIS?

The most at-risk Regions are **Afghanistan** and **Pakistan**, where polio represents a health emergency.



■ ENDEMIC AREAS

### HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST POLIOMYELITIS?

**Good hygiene when it comes to food and water.**

The following steps can therefore help protect yourself against polio and other food-borne and water-borne diseases, the risk of which may increase when travelling to endemic areas:

- Wash your hands properly before eating
- Only drink bottled, boiled or purified water
- Avoid ice cream, ice cubes and food that has come into contact with ice
- Avoid raw food
- Eat only fruit that can be peeled
- Make sure that hot and well-cooked food is made with fresh products and consumed straight away
- Avoid non-pasteurised dairy products

### CAN POLIOMYELITIS BE TREATED?

There is no cure for polio. Only symptomatic treatments may be provided, which can only partially minimise the effects of the disease.

## VACCINATION

Polio vaccination is usually available in combination with tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis antigens. The Ministry of Health recommends the vaccination against polio of all newborns, with a three-dose schedule, followed by preschool and adolescent boosters, for a total of five doses over a person's lifetime.

## BEFORE DEPARTING

Talk to your General Practitioner or make an appointment at a vaccination centre of your Local Health Unit to assess your risk of contracting polio and to check your vaccination status.

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## INFORMATION ON TETANUS FOR THOSE TRAVELLING ABROAD



## What is Tetanus?

**Tetanus is a disease caused by the *Clostridium tetani* bacterium that causes spastic paralysis of the muscles. In the most severe cases, where respiratory muscles are involved, it can lead to death.**

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms of tetanus can occur from 3 to 21 days after contracting it, with an average of 14 days.

The shorter the incubation, the greater the severity of the disease. Muscle contractions caused by the disease normally start in the head and generally spread to other parts of the body, such as the trunk and limbs.

#### The most common symptoms include:

- Jaw cramping
- Muscle stiffness all over the body
- Difficulty swallowing
- Muscle spasms and contractions (back, abdomen and limbs)
- Fever and sweating
- Changes in blood pressure and heart rate

#### As tetanus progresses, these symptoms may worsen and you may get other symptoms, including:

- Respiratory difficulty
- Fractures
- Secondary infections
- Pneumonia
- Death

### HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Tetanus is infectious but not contagious. The bacterium normally lives in the intestine of animals such as cattle, horses, sheep, and that of humans, from which it is excreted in the faeces.

Bacterial spores can survive for years in the environment, often contaminating dust and soil.

The disease develops when infected soil, stool or rusty tools come into contact with or cause open cuts or wounds.

## WHAT IS THE RISK OF CONTRACTING TETANUS?

As with many travel-related diseases, your risk of contracting tetanus depends on the activities you take part in.

People at particular risk are those who practice outdoor activities and excursions.

## WHICH REGIONS ARE AT RISK FOR TETANUS?

Tetanus is a disease spread worldwide because it may be present in the environment.



## CAN TETANUS BE TREATED?

Tetanus treatment requires hospitalisation and involves administration of antimicrobials, such as penicillin G and metronidazole, as well as actions aimed at relieving muscle spasms.

Complete recovery may take months. In the absence of adequate therapy, mortality reaches 50% in the most severe forms on account of respiratory failure or cardiac arrest.

## VACCINATION

Tetanus vaccination, which is recommended by the Ministry of Health, involves a primary vaccination of all newborns, followed by several boosters over a person's lifetime.

Recommended boosters are:

- Preschool or childhood at age 6
- Adolescents from age 12 to age 18
- Adults every 10 years (from age 19 onwards)

## BEFORE DEPARTING

Talk to your General Practitioner or make an appointment at a vaccination centre of your Local Health Unit to assess your risk of contracting tetanus and to check your vaccination status.

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References available on page 18.

# References

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## Yellow fever

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