

Health Advice for Travellers to the 10th Pacific Mini-Games, Vanuatu, 2017

This is the second health advice for travellers to the 10th Pacific Mini Games (Van2017). The first health advice was sent on PacNet and to heads of delegations at the beginning of September. Following the first health advice, we have received a request for more information on the malaria situation in Vanuatu. This is addressed in the health advice below. All the recommendations of the first advice are still valid.

Health alert

An increasing number of mumps cases has recently been reported in Vanuatu. Mumps outbreaks or circulation are also occurring in several countries in the Pacific (Hawaii, Kosrae State in the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, New Zealand and Tonga), as well as other regions in the world. The risk for spread of mumps virus during the Mini Games is addressed in this health advice.

About mumps

Mumps is a common infectious disease in many parts of the world including the Pacific and is caused by a virus. The virus is spread through coughs and sneezes and an outbreak can occur where there is crowding such as in a dormitory with a person who has mumps. Spread of the virus can also occur through touching surfaces such as door knobs, use of cutlery, lipsticks, cigarettes, etc. that have been contaminated with saliva of an infected person. Some people who get mumps have very mild or no symptoms, often not knowing they have the disease. Most will experience complete recovery in a few weeks. However, mumps can occasionally cause complications, especially in adults leading to orchitis, encephalitis, meningitis, ophritis, mastitis and deafness. Mumps in pregnancy can be dangerous, with an increased risk of miscarriage in the first 3-4 months.

BEFORE you travel

Mumps can be prevented with the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Prior to their travel, athletes and visitors are advised to ensure that they are protected against mumps by ensuring that:

- Children 12 months of age or older had received 2 doses of MMR vaccine, separated by at least 28 days.
- Teenagers and adults who have no evidence of protection against mumps (those that had mumps are considered immune for life) should also receive 2 doses of MMR vaccine, separated by at least 28 days.

Vaccinations



You should be up-to-date on your routine and recommended vaccinations, including for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) as above mentioned, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio. You may also want to get vaccines for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Typhoid Fever, and seasonal influenza. Consult your general practitioner for more advice about vaccinations. Remember that some vaccines require some time to take effect, and more than one dose may be needed.

Health check-up



For their own safety and wellbeing, participants and visitors should be fit for travel. Those with pre-existing medical conditions must ensure that they are cleared for travel by scheduling a doctor's appointment at least four weeks before travel. Talk to your doctor about medicines that you may need when travelling to Vanuatu during your stay.

Health kit

Pack a travel health kit with first aid supplies (sunscreen, painkillers, antiseptic, insect repellent and anti-diarrhoea tablets, alcohol hand sanitizer) and medications, enough to last your entire trip. Please bring one month's supply of your routine prescription medications; carry them in their original packaging and follow the directions for use. Availability of condoms is limited and, if needed, participants are encouraged to bring their own supply.



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Malaria travel advice for Vanuatu

If you plan to travel to areas with malaria, please ensure you follow basic prevention measures to avoid, and to protect against mosquito bites by:

- wearing appropriate clothing, such as long-sleeved shirts and long pants;
- applying an insect repellent (containing one of the following substances: DEET, picaridin, citriodiol, IR3535) to exposed skin;
- treating clothes with permethrin for added protection;
- sleeping under long-lasting and insecticide-treated bed nets.

Areas with malaria: Present in most provinces and islands, except Tafea province in the south where no cases have been reported for the last 5 years. Islands with the highest risk are Santo Island (Sanma Province) and Malekula Island (Malampa Province). Malaria risk is very low in the capital, Port Vila, where all the games activities will take place.

Estimated relative risk of malaria for travellers: Low.

Drug resistance: Chloroquine.

Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 35%, *P. vivax* 65%.

Recommended chemoprophylaxis: If you plan to travel to islands north of Port Vila, you might want to consider taking prophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil or doxycycline.

Consult your physician at least 2 weeks prior to departure to get proper dosage and duration of treatment.



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Travel insurance

Health insurance that covers you in your home country may not cover you in Vanuatu. You will be liable for covering any medical and associated costs. Cover yourself with an appropriate level of travel health insurance.

AFTER the games

If you develop any illness after returning from Vanuatu, you may have obligations to notify immigration and local healthcare authorities. You should report any illnesses you have developed, and indicate your travel history.

01

Practise healthy habits, such as good hand hygiene and proper coughing and sneezing etiquette (cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve).

02

To stay fit and healthy: do not smoke; avoid binge drinking of alcohol and homebrew; avoid drugs and substance abuse; eat more vegetables and fruits; and be physically active every day.

GENERAL ADVICE for everyone