



Rift Valley fever

There is currently an outbreak of Rift Valley fever in some areas of South Africa. To protect yourself from infection, especially if you are intending to visit farms or game reserves, avoid coming into contact with animals, eating raw milk or other animal products and protect yourself against mosquito and other insect bites.

Traveller's diarrhoea

Diarrhoea is the most common health problem for travellers. It can be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps and fever, and you can catch it from contaminated food or water. To avoid infection, be very careful what you eat and drink. If you get diarrhoea it is very important, **especially for children**, to avoid becoming dehydrated. Make sure you drink enough fluids, and take oral rehydration salts (ORS). These are available in South African pharmacies.

If your diarrhoea becomes very frequent, very watery, contains blood, or lasts beyond 3 days, seek medical help quickly.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

You can catch sexually transmitted infections during heterosexual and homosexual sex of all kinds: anal, vaginal or oral. These diseases range from uncomfortable and embarrassing conditions to those that kill you if they're left untreated, and they can be caught from sexual partners who seem completely healthy. In particular, the rate of HIV/AIDS in South Africa is very high. To avoid the risk of sexually transmitted infections, make sure you follow these precautions:

- Use a condom properly – male or female
- Don't inject drugs, and don't share **any** kind of needles (including for blood transfusions or tattoos)
- If you have a medical condition that requires injections (like diabetes), make sure you bring syringes with you. Syringes and needles are also available at pharmacies in South Africa.

Rabies

Rabies is spread by contact with infected mammals, including bats, but most commonly dogs. It's a lethal disease, so if you are bitten by an animal, you must seek medical advice **immediately** at the nearest health care facility. To keep your risk low, avoid contact with wild/stray animals. Be especially careful of dogs wandering around without owners.

Remember to plan ahead for your health and safety protection

It's important that you inform yourself of the potential health and safety risks in South Africa, and that you take the necessary precautions before and during your travel to avoid illness and injury.

World Health Organization's International Advisory Group on Mass Gatherings:

www.who.int/csr/mass_gatherings/en



Useful links

National Department of Health of South Africa:

www.doh.gov.za/

National Institute of Communicable Disease:

www.nicd.ac.za/fifa2010/A_Guide_for_World_Cup_Visitors.pdf

WHO International Travel and Health:

www.who.int/ith

The Government of South Africa has worked hard to ensure your stay during 2010 FIFA World Cup is pleasant, healthy and safe - **but it's you who has the final responsibility for protecting your health in South Africa.**



World Health Organization



health
Department:
Health
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World Health Organization



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Before you leave

Meet with a doctor at least 4-6 weeks before you leave. The doctor will review your itinerary and medical history to make sure you get the right vaccinations, medicines, and information on safety and security.

Vaccinations

Before travelling, you must be up-to-date on your routine travel vaccinations. These include **diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles**, and **mumps**. Making sure your measles and polio vaccinations are up-to-date is especially important – there have been recent outbreaks of measles in South Africa, and polio has been eliminated from South Africa and must not be re-introduced. If you are coming from a country where polio cases occurred recently, this vaccination is crucial (see www.polioeradication.org/caseload.asp for countries where polio cases occurred recently).

As well as the essential vaccines, your doctor might suggest you get others. What extra vaccines you need depends on where in South Africa you're going, and what you'll be doing when you get there. Other vaccines you might need include **hepatitis A, hepatitis B and typhoid fever**.

Yellow fever

If you are arriving in South Africa from an area at risk of yellow fever, you must have a valid certificate of yellow fever vaccination. This certificate must show you were vaccinated at least 10 days before travelling, and not more than 10 years before arriving in South Africa. Find out from your doctor what areas are at risk of yellow fever transmission: if you need the right papers and you don't have them, **you will be refused entry to South Africa**. Please also note that if you are transiting through a yellow fever area, you'll need the vaccine as well - no matter how short a time you spend in transit.

Flu: Seasonal Influenza and Pandemic A(H1N1) Influenza

It's going to be winter in South Africa during the World Cup, and this means you'll be more at risk from influenza, or flu. Vaccination is the best protection against flu. If you are coming to South Africa for the World Cup, you should get vaccinated against seasonal flu and Pandemic A(H1N1) Influenza. In most countries, routine flu vaccinations already include protection against Pandemic A(H1N1) Influenza, but do check this with your doctor. If you are at high risk of serious disease from flu viruses, it's even more

important that you receive the right flu vaccinations. You should make flu vaccinations a priority if you're pregnant or elderly; if you have a chronic disease; or if your immune system is already compromised.

Weather and exposure

Bring sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat, to protect against sunburn. Take measures to protect against bites – and diseases spread by insects, like malaria or rift valley fever (see the Malaria section for more information about what you can do). Also remember that it's going to be winter in South Africa, and temperatures can get down to freezing in some areas. Bring waterproofs and proper warm clothing with you, especially if you're going to evening games.

Other matters

Always make photocopies of your passport, and if you have any health conditions that might require treatment, copy your health documents too. If you need any important medications during your travels, prepare a travel health kit and keep it with you all the time. Check your health insurance to make sure it covers you for medical treatment in South Africa. If it doesn't, upgrade it. You might also want insurance that covers medical evacuation, in case you get seriously ill and need to be flown home. Many travel insurance policies cover this, but make sure you check.

When you arrive in South Africa

Safety and security

Crime, including theft and violent crime, does occur in South Africa. It's important to exercise caution. On arrival at the airport, be vigilant and aware of your surroundings. Try to have your transport provided by your hotel or travel agency. If this isn't possible, only use authorized airport taxis or shuttle buses. If you're driving yourself, stay aware of your surroundings, and of who or what is in front of and behind you. Use your rear view mirror often. If you suspect you're being followed, drive to the nearest police station or crowded area.

On the street, stay aware of your surroundings and avoid empty or badly-lit streets. Don't be drawn off by strangers to places you didn't mean to go.

During the World Cup, police officers will be present on the streets in great numbers. They are there to protect and help you, so don't hesitate to ask them for assistance. Remember the emergency numbers: **10111** for the police, and **10177** for medical emergencies. From a mobile phone, you can also dial **112**.

Food and water safety

A number of diseases, some serious, can be transmitted by food and water. *A Guide to Safe Food for Travellers* is available at airports in South Africa. In general, you should only eat food that's thoroughly cooked and steaming hot when served. Wash your hands before handling food, and avoid anything that's uncooked, apart from undamaged fruits and vegetables that can be peeled or shelled. Don't eat food that's been at room temperature for several hours, like uncovered buffet food and food from street and beach vendors.

The tap water in South Africa is safe to drink in many areas, but you should always make sure **before** you drink it. If you go swimming, only swim in water that you know to be safe – safe for swimming, and safe from the risk of catching a disease called **schistosomiasis**, which you get from skin contact with unsafe fresh water. If you're not sure, check with someone who knows.

Road Safety

South Africans drive on the **left hand side of the road** – take extra caution if you aren't used to this! Don't drive on unfamiliar and unlit roads. Obey the rules like you would at home – don't drive after drinking alcohol, stay within the speed limit, and **always** wear a seat belt.

Specific disease prevention

Malaria

Malaria occurs in some areas of South Africa, as do other diseases spread by insects and ticks. It's important to talk to your doctor before leaving about whether you need malaria protection, and if so, what is the best type of protection for you. Malaria is spread by mosquitoes, so you should always protect yourself from bites. You might also need to take anti-malaria medication. Ways to protect yourself from mosquitoes, other insects and ticks include:

- Wear long trousers and long sleeved clothing, especially in the evening when mosquitoes are most active
- Apply an insect repellent containing DEET to exposed skin
- Sleep under a mosquito-proof bed net treated with an approved insecticide
- Use an insecticide spray in your room after closing windows and doors