

The Diseases and Viruses

Disease / Virus	Description
Cholera	An acute diarrheal disease caused by an infection in the intestines that can kill even a healthy adult in a matter of hours. Symptoms, including severe watery diarrhoea, can surface in as little as two hours or up to five days after infection, and can then trigger extreme dehydration and kidney failure.
Hepatitis A	A serious liver disease caused by a virus. The virus is found in the faeces of infected people. Spread by eating contaminated food or water, sexual contact and poor hygiene. Some people don't feel sick but skin and eyes can turn yellow. An infected person can get very sick and may need to be hospitalised.
Hepatitis B	A serious liver disease caused by a virus. The virus is transmitted by blood or body fluids, sexual contact and poor hygiene. Some people don't feel sick the virus can remain dormant in the liver for several years. An infected person can get very sick and may need to be hospitalised.
Japanese Encephalitis	A virus transmitted by infected mosquitos. Most infections are mild with fever and headache or without apparent symptoms. However about 1 in 200 infections result in a severe reaction; rapid onset of high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, seizures, spastic paralysis, and death.
Malaria	A mosquito-borne disease caused by parasites which travel to the liver, where they mature. After several days, the mature parasites enter the bloodstream and begin to infect red blood cells. Symptoms include fever, chills, and flu-like illness. Left untreated, they may develop severe complications and die. There is no vaccine for Malaria. Ask our Travel Team about prescription medicine to carry with you.
Meningococcal Disease (Meningitis)	Meningococcal bacteria are spread by coughing or sneezing, kissing, sharing of eating utensils and drinking vessels and poor hygiene. The disease can develop very quickly and early treatment is important. Meningococcal disease has a range of general symptoms, these include: high fever, headache, sleepiness, joint and muscle pains. There can also be some more specific symptoms, such as: a stiff neck, dislike of bright lights, vomiting, a rash consisting of reddish-purple pin-prick spots or bruises. Additional symptoms for infants: crying and refusal to feed.
Poliomyelitis (Polio)	A crippling, potentially deadly infectious disease. The virus infects the brain, nervous system and spinal cord, causing paralysis. Symptoms include fever, sore throat, headache, neck stiffness and pains in the limbs. Spread by food or water contaminated with human faeces.
Rabies (Hydrophobia)	Mainly a disease of animals. Humans get rabies when they are bitten by infected animals. The rabies virus infects the central nervous system, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death. Early symptoms of rabies are similar to that of many other illnesses, including fever, headache, and general weakness or discomfort. As the disease progresses, more specific symptoms appear and may include anxiety, hallucinations, increase in saliva, partial paralysis, and fear of water resulting in death.
Tetanus (Lock Jaw)	The virus is found in the soil and enters the body through cuts and wounds. Initial symptoms include weakness, stiffness or cramps and difficulty chewing or swallowing food. As the disease progresses tetanus is characterised by muscular rigidity and very painful contraction spasms.
Typhoid	A disease transmitted through the ingestion of food or drink, which has been contaminated by the faeces of an infected person. It can cause a high fever, weakness, headache, loss of appetite, stomach pains, and a rash of flat, rose-coloured spots. Typhoid is deadly without treatment, killing up to one-third of people who become infected. It can be treated with antibiotics, but drug-resistant strains are a growing problem. The vaccine is successful in preventing Typhoid.
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	A highly infectious bacterial infection spread by coughing and sneezing. It causes severe bouts of coughing, which may be accompanied by vomiting and a whooping sound. May last up to 3 months.
Yellow Fever	Caused by a virus that is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. The word "yellow" refers to the jaundice that affects some patients. There is no cure. The majority of infected patients improve and their symptoms disappear after 3 to 4 days. However, 15% of patients enter a second, more toxic, phase of the disease. About half of the patients who enter the second phase die within 10 to 14 days, the rest recover. Vaccination is the most important preventative measure.
Zika Virus	A virus caused by a bite of an infected mosquito. There is no known vaccine. Ask our Travel Team for advice on prevention.