

# Survival Guide

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# Health

As long as you stay up to date with your vaccinations and take basic preventive measures, you're unlikely to succumb to most serious health hazards. While Botswana and Namibia do offer an impressive selection of tropical diseases, it's more likely you'll get a bout of diarrhoea or a cold than an exotic malady. The main exception to this is malaria, which is a real risk in lower-lying areas.

## BEFORE YOU GO

A little predeparture planning will save you trouble later. Get a check-up from your dentist and from your doctor if you have any regular medication or chronic

illness, eg high blood pressure or asthma. You should also organise spare contact lenses and glasses (and take your optical prescription with you); get a first-aid and medical kit together; and arrange necessary vaccinations.

Travellers can register with the International Association for Medical Advice to Travellers ([www.iamat.org](http://www.iamat.org)), which provides directories of certified doctors in-country. If you'll be spending much time in more remote areas, consider doing a first-aid course (contact the Red Cross or St John's Ambulance), or attending a remote medicine first-aid course, such as that offered by

Wilderness Medical Training ([www.wildernessmedical-training.co.uk](http://www.wildernessmedical-training.co.uk)).

If you are bringing medications with you, carry them in their original containers, clearly labelled. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing all medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

## Insurance

In Botswana and Namibia, most doctors expect payment in cash. Find out in advance whether your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers, or will reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures. It's also vital to ensure that your travel insurance will cover any emergency transport required to get you to a hospital in a major city, or all the way home, by air and with a medical attendant if necessary. Not all insurance covers this, so check the contract carefully. If you need medical assistance, your insurance company might be able to help locate the nearest hospital or clinic, or you can ask at your hotel. In an emergency, contact your embassy or consulate.

## RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organization ([www.who.int/en](http://www.who.int/en)) recommends that all travellers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, as well as for hepatitis B, regardless of their destination. The consequences of these diseases can be severe, and outbreaks do occur.

According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)), the following vaccinations are recommended for Botswana and Namibia: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, rabies and typhoid, and boosters for tetanus, diphtheria and measles. Despite an outbreak in Angola in 2016 and a single case along the Angola–Namibia border at the time, yellow fever was not a risk in the region at the time of writing, but the certificate is an entry requirement if you're coming from an infected region.