

Survival Guide

HEALTH 226

Before You Go 226

In Africa 227

LANGUAGE 232

Bemba 232

Chichewa 233

Lozi 233

Nyanja 234

Portuguese 235

Tonga 236

Glossary 238

Health

While the region has an impressive selection of tropical diseases, it's more likely you'll get a bout of diarrhoea or a cold than a more exotic malady. Stay up to date with your vaccinations and take basic preventive measures, and you'll be unlikely to succumb to any of the serious health hazards.

Before You Go

Insurance

Find out in advance whether your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or will reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures. Most doctors and clinics in the region expect up-front payment in cash.

It's vital to ensure that your travel insurance will cover any emergency transport required to get you at least to Johannesburg (South Africa), or all the way home, by air and with a medical attendant if necessary.

If your policy requires you to pay first and claim later for medical treatment, be sure to keep all documentation. Some policies ask you to call back (reverse charges) to a centre in your home country where an immediate assessment of your problem is made. Since reverse-charge calls aren't possible in many parts of the region, contact the insurance company before setting off to confirm how best to contact it in an emergency.

Recommended Vaccinations

The World Health Organization (www.who.int/en/) recommends that all travellers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, as well as for hepatitis B, regardless of their destination.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (www.cdc.gov/), the following additional vaccinations are recommended for the region: hepatitis A, rabies and typhoid, and boosters for tetanus, diphtheria and measles. A yellow-fever vaccination certificate is not officially required to enter any of the three countries unless you are entering from an infected area (which are found in several neighbouring countries), but carrying one is advised; the certificate is often requested.

Medical Checklist

Carry a medical and first-aid kit to help yourself in the case of minor illness or injury. Possible items to include:

- Antibiotics (prescription only), eg ciprofloxacin (Ciproxin) or norfloxacin (Utinor)
- Antidiarrhoeal drugs (eg loperamide)
- Acetaminophen (paracetamol) or aspirin
- Antibacterial ointment (eg Bactroban) for cuts and abrasions (prescription only)

- Anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- Antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- Antimalaria pills
- Steroid cream, such as hydrocortisone (for allergic rashes)
- Bandages, gauze, gauze rolls
- Adhesive or paper tape
- Scissors, safety pins, tweezers
- Thermometer
- Pocket knife
- Insect repellent containing DEET for the skin
- Insect spray containing Permethrin for clothing, tents and bed nets
- Sunblock
- Oral rehydration salts
- Iodine tablets (for water purification)
- Sterile needles, syringes and fluids if travelling to remote areas
- Self-diagnostic kit that can identify malaria in the blood from a finger prick, and emergency treatment

Other Preparations

- Get a check-up from your dentist and also your doctor if you have any regular medication or chronic illness, such as high blood pressure or asthma.
- Organise spare contact lenses and glasses (and take