

## United States

### Bryce Canyon National Park

Photo courtesy of Preeyal Gupta, Emory University, USA



Capital City : "Washington, D.C."

Official Language: "English"

Monetary Unit: "dollar (U.S.\$)"

## General information

The information on these pages should be used to research health risks and to inform the pre-travel consultation. For advice regarding safety and security please check the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website.

Travellers should ideally arrange an appointment with their health professional at least four to six weeks before travel. However, even if time is short, an appointment is still worthwhile. This appointment provides an opportunity to assess health risks taking into account a number of factors including destination, medical history, and planned activities. For those with pre-existing health problems, an earlier appointment is recommended.

While most travellers have a healthy and safe trip, there are some risks that are relevant to travellers regardless of destination. These may for example include road traffic and other accidents, diseases transmitted by insects or ticks, diseases transmitted by contaminated food and water, sexually transmitted infections, or health issues related to the heat or cold.

All travellers should ensure they have [adequate travel health insurance](#).

A list of useful resources including advice on how to reduce the risk of certain health problems is

available below.

## Resources

- [Food and water hygiene](#)
- [Insect and tick bite avoidance](#)
- [Personal safety](#)
- [Sexually transmitted infections](#)
- [Sun protection](#)

## Vaccine recommendations

Details of vaccination recommendations and requirements are provided below.

### All Travellers

Travellers should be up to date with routine vaccination courses and boosters as [recommended in the UK](#). These vaccinations include for example [measles-mumps-rubella \(MMR\)](#) vaccine and diphtheria-tetanus-polio vaccine.

Those who may be at increased risk of an infectious disease due to their work, lifestyle choice, or certain underlying health problems should be up to date with additional recommended vaccines. See the individual chapters of the 'Green Book' [Immunisation against infectious disease](#) for further details.

### Certificate Requirements

There are no certificate requirements under International Health Regulations.

### Most Travellers

The vaccines in this section are recommended for most travellers visiting this country. Information on these vaccines can be found by clicking on the blue arrow. Vaccines are listed alphabetically.

#### Tetanus

Tetanus is caused by a toxin released from *Clostridium tetani* and occurs worldwide. Tetanus bacteria are present in soil and manure and may be introduced through open wounds such as a puncture wound, burn or scratch.

### Prevention

Travellers should thoroughly clean all wounds and seek appropriate medical attention.

### Tetanus vaccination

- Travellers should have completed a primary vaccination course according to the UK

schedule.

- If travelling to a country where medical facilities may be limited, a booster dose of a tetanus-containing vaccine is recommended if the last dose was more than ten years ago even if five doses of vaccine have been given previously.

Country specific information on medical facilities may be found in the 'health' section of the [FCO foreign travel advice](#) website.

[Tetanus in brief](#)

## Some Travellers

The vaccines in this section are recommended for some travellers visiting this country. Information on when these vaccines should be considered can be found by clicking on the arrow. Vaccines are listed alphabetically.

### Rabies

Rabies is a viral infection which is usually transmitted following contact with the saliva of an infected animal most often via a bite, scratch or lick to an open wound or mucous membrane (such as on the eye, nose or mouth). Although many different animals can transmit the virus, worldwide most cases follow a bite or scratch from an infected dog. Bats are also an important source of infection in some countries.

Rabies symptoms can take some time to develop, but when they do the condition is almost always fatal.

The risk of exposure is increased by certain activities and length of stay (see below). Children are at increased risk as they are less likely to avoid contact with animals and to report a bite, scratch or lick.

## Rabies in USA

Rabies has only been reported in wild animals in this country; therefore most travellers are considered to be at low risk for rabies. Bats may also carry rabies-like viruses in this country.

## Prevention

- Travellers should avoid contact with wild animals. Rabies is preventable with prompt post-exposure treatment.
- Following a possible exposure, wounds should be thoroughly cleansed and an urgent local medical assessment sought, even if the wound appears trivial. Although rabies has not been reported in domestic animals, it is still sensible to seek prompt medical advice if bitten or scratched by all animals.
- Post-exposure treatment and advice should be in accordance with [national guidelines](#).

## Rabies vaccination

- Pre-exposure vaccines are recommended for those who are at increased risk due to their

work (e.g. laboratory staff working with the virus, those working with animals or health care workers who may be caring for infected patients).

- Pre-exposure vaccines could be considered for those who are at increased risk of exposure to wild animals.

[Rabies in brief](#)

## Other risks

There are some risks that are relevant to all travellers regardless of destination. These may for example include road traffic and other accidents, diseases transmitted by insects or ticks, diseases transmitted by contaminated food and water, sexually transmitted infections, or health issues related to the heat or cold. Some additional risks (which may be present in all or part of this country) are mentioned below and are presented alphabetically.

### Altitude

There is a risk of altitude illness when travelling to destinations of 2,500 metres (8,200 feet) or higher. Important risk factors are the altitude gained, rate of ascent and sleeping altitude. Rapid ascent without a period of acclimatisation puts a traveller at higher risk.

There are three syndromes; acute mountain sickness (AMS), high-altitude cerebral oedema (HACE) and high-altitude pulmonary oedema (HAPE). HACE and HAPE require immediate descent and medical treatment.

### Altitude illness in USA

There is a point of elevation in this country higher than 2,500 metres. Example places of interest: Mt McKinley 6,194m, Mt Rainier 4,392m, Pikes Peak 4,301m, Leadville 3,100m and Mt Kea (Hawaii) 4,205m.

### Prevention

- Travellers should spend a few days at an altitude below 3,000m.
- Where possible travellers should avoid travel from altitudes less than 1,200m to altitudes greater than 3,500m in a single day.
- Ascent above 3,000m should be gradual. Travellers should avoid increasing sleeping elevation by more than 500m per day and ensure a rest day (at the same altitude) every three or four days.
- Acetazolamide can be used to assist with acclimatisation, but should not replace gradual ascent.
- Travellers who develop symptoms of AMS (headache, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea and sleep disturbance) should avoid further ascent. In the absence of improvement or with progression of symptoms the first response should be to descend.
- Development of HACE or HAPE symptoms requires immediate descent and emergency medical treatment.

[Altitude illness in brief](#)

## Dengue

Dengue is a viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes which predominantly feed between dawn and dusk. It causes a flu-like illness, which can occasionally develop into a more serious life-threatening form of the disease. Severe dengue is rare in travellers.

The mosquitoes that transmit dengue are most abundant in towns, cities and surrounding areas. All travellers to dengue areas are at risk.

### Dengue in United States

Dengue outbreaks are reported from time to time in United States. Affected states include Florida, Hawaii, and Texas.

### Prevention

- All travellers should avoid mosquito bites particularly between dawn and dusk.
- There is currently no medication or vaccination available for travellers to prevent dengue.

[Dengue in brief](#)

## Zika Virus

Zika virus (ZIKV) is a viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes which predominantly feed between dawn and dusk. A small number of cases of sexual transmission of ZIKV have also been reported. Most people infected with ZIKV have no symptoms. When symptoms do occur they are usually mild and short-lived. Serious complications and deaths are not common. However, there is now scientific consensus that Zika virus is a cause of congenital Zika syndrome (microcephaly and other congenital anomalies) and Guillain-Barré syndrome.

### Zika virus in Florida and Cameron County in Texas, United States

**The risk in Florida and in Cameron County, Texas is considered low.** Further details for Florida can be found on the [Florida Health](#) website. [Texas Department of State Health Services have reported a small number of locally acquired cases of Zika virus in Cameron County](#) (South East on border with Mexico).

### Prevention

- All travellers should avoid mosquito bites particularly between dawn and dusk.

- There is no vaccination or medication to prevent ZIKV infection.

Pregnant women should seek medical advice if they develop ZIKV symptoms, and contact their GP on return.

## Zika virus in Hidalgo County in Texas, United States

[Texas Department of State Health Services has determined a Hidalgo County resident](#) who previously had a Zika infection was most likely infected in Texas. **The risk in Hidalgo County is considered moderate. Pregnant women should consider postponing non-essential travel to this area** until after pregnancy.

As this is an evolving situation, the classification of areas in the USA will be reviewed on a regular basis.

### Prevention

- All travellers should avoid mosquito bites particularly between dawn and dusk.
- There is no vaccination or medication to prevent ZIKV infection.
- It is recommended that pregnant women planning to travel to areas with a moderate risk of ZIKV transmission should consider postponing non-essential travel until after pregnancy.
- Women should avoid becoming pregnant while travelling in, and for 8 weeks after leaving an area with active ZIKV transmission or 8 weeks after last possible ZIKV exposure.
- Couples should follow [guidance on prevention of sexual transmission of Zika](#) and avoid conception while travelling and for up to 6 months on return.
- If a woman develops symptoms compatible with ZIKV infection, it is recommended she avoids becoming pregnant for a further 8 weeks following symptom onset.
- Pregnant women who visited this country while pregnant, or who become pregnant within 8 weeks of leaving this country, or within 8 weeks after last possible ZIKV exposure, should contact their GP, obstetrician or midwife for further advice, even if they have not been unwell. [Further information about when to perform fetal ultrasound scanning, and, if necessary, referral to the local fetal medicine service is available.](#)

### Preventing sexual transmission

- Most cases of ZIKV are acquired via mosquito bites but cases of sexual transmission of ZIKV are occasionally reported.
- [See further information for pregnant women, their partners and couples planning pregnancy.](#)

[See detailed guidance on factors to consider when assessing the risk of ZIKV.](#)

[Zika virus in brief](#)

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