

Tonga

Capital City : "Nuku'alofa"
Official Language: "Tongan; English"
Monetary Unit: "pa'anga (T\$)"

General Information

The information on these pages should be used to research health risks and to inform the pre-travel consultation.

Due to COVID-19, travel advice is subject to rapid change. Countries may change entry requirements and close their borders at very short notice. Travellers must ensure they check current [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office \(FCDO\) travel advice](#) in addition to the [FCDO specific country page](#) (where available) which provides additional information on travel restrictions and entry requirements in addition to safety and security advice.

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.

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.

Country specific diphtheria recommendations are not provided here. Diphtheria tetanus and polio

are combined in a single vaccine in the UK. Therefore, when a tetanus booster is recommended for travellers, diphtheria vaccine is also given. Should there be an outbreak of diphtheria in a country, diphtheria vaccination guidance will be provided.

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 [FCDO 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.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a viral infection transmitted through contaminated food and water or by direct contact

with an infectious person. Symptoms are often mild or absent in young children, but the disease becomes more serious with advancing age. Recovery can vary from weeks to months. Following hepatitis A illness immunity is lifelong.

Those at increased risk include travellers visiting friends and relatives, long-stay travellers, and those visiting areas of poor sanitation.

Prevention

All travellers should take care with personal, food and water hygiene.

Hepatitis A vaccination

Vaccination is recommended for those whose activities put them at increased risk. This includes:

- those who are staying with or visiting the local population.
- frequent and/or long-stay travellers to areas where sanitation and food hygiene are likely to be poor.
- adventure travellers visiting rural areas and staying in basic accommodation such as backpackers.
- those with existing medical conditions such as liver disease or haemophilia.
- men who have sex with men.
- injecting drug users.
- those who may be exposed to the virus through their work.
- those going to areas of hepatitis A outbreaks who have limited access to safe water and medical care.

[Hepatitis A in brief](#)

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a viral infection; it is transmitted by exposure to infected blood or body fluids. This mostly occurs during sexual contact or as a result of blood-to-blood contact (for example from contaminated equipment during medical and dental procedures, tattooing or body piercing procedures, and sharing of intravenous needles). Mothers with the virus can also transmit the infection to their baby during childbirth.

Hepatitis B in Tonga

2% or more of the population are known or thought to be persistently infected with the hepatitis B virus (intermediate/high prevalence).

Prevention

Travellers should avoid contact with blood or body fluids. This includes:

- avoiding unprotected sexual intercourse.
- avoiding tattooing, piercing, public shaving, and acupuncture (unless sterile equipment is used).

- not sharing needles or other injection equipment.
- following universal precautions if working in a medical/dental/high risk setting.

A sterile medical equipment kit may be helpful when travelling to resource poor areas.

Hepatitis B vaccination

Vaccination could be considered for all travellers, and is recommended for those whose activities or medical history put them at increased risk including:

- those who may have unprotected sex.
- those who may be exposed to contaminated needles through injecting drug use.
- those who may be exposed to blood or body fluids through their work (e.g. health workers).
- those who may be exposed to contaminated needles as a result of having medical or dental care e.g. those with pre-existing medical conditions and those travelling for medical care abroad including those intending to receive renal dialysis overseas.
- long-stay travellers.
- those who are participating in contact sports.
- families adopting children from this country.

[Hepatitis B in brief](#)

Rabies (Bat Lyssavirus)

Although rare, bat lyssaviruses (bat rabies) can be transmitted to humans or other animals following contact with the saliva of an infected bat most often by a bite. The disease can also be transmitted if the saliva of an infected bat gets into open wounds or mucous membranes (such as on the eye, nose or mouth). Bat lyssaviruses can cause disease in humans that is indistinguishable from rabies.

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

The risk to most travellers is low. However, it is increased for certain occupations for example bat handlers and veterinarians, or certain activities such as caving.

Bat Lyssavirus in Tonga

Rabies has not been reported in this country; therefore most travellers are considered to be at low risk. However, bats may carry bat lyssavirus (bat rabies).

Prevention

- Travellers should avoid contact with bats. Bites from bats are frequently unrecognised. Rabies-like disease caused by bat lyssaviruses is preventable with prompt post-exposure rabies management.
- 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 other animals in this country, it is sensible to seek prompt medical advice if bitten or scratched. It is possible, although very rare for bats to pass rabies like viruses to other animals including pets.

- Post-exposure treatment and advice should be in accordance with [national guidelines](#).

Rabies vaccination

- A full course of pre-exposure vaccines simplifies and shortens the course of post-exposure treatment and removes the need for rabies immunoglobulin which is in short supply world-wide.
- Pre-exposure rabies vaccinations are recommended for those who are at increased risk due to their work (e.g. laboratory staff working with the virus and those working with bats).
- Pre-exposure vaccines could be considered for those whose activities put them at increased risk of exposure to bats.

[Rabies in brief](#)

Typhoid

Typhoid is a bacterial infection transmitted through contaminated food and water. Previous typhoid illness may only partially protect against re-infection.

Travellers who will have access to safe food and water are likely to be at low risk. Those at increased risk include travellers visiting friends and relatives, frequent or long-stay travellers to areas where sanitation and food hygiene are likely to be poor, and laboratory personnel who may handle the bacteria for their work.

Typhoid in Tonga

Typhoid fever is known or presumed to occur in this country.

Prevention

All travellers should take care with personal, food and water hygiene.

Typhoid vaccination

- Vaccination could be considered for those whose activities put them at increased risk (see above).
- Oral and injectable typhoid vaccinations are available.

[Typhoid 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 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. Select risk to expand information.

Biting insects or ticks

Insect or tick bites can cause irritation and infections of the skin at the site of a bite. They can also spread certain diseases.

Diseases in Oceania Pacific Islands

There is a risk of insect or tick-borne diseases in some areas of the Oceania Pacific Islands. This includes diseases such as [chikungunya](#).

Prevention

- All travellers should avoid insect and tick bites day and night.
- There are no vaccinations (or medications) to prevent these diseases.

Further information about specific insect or tick-borne diseases for this country can be found, if appropriate on this page, in other sections of the country information pages and the [insect and tick bite avoidance factsheet](#).

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 Tonga

There is a risk of dengue in this country.

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](#)

Influenza

Seasonal influenza is a viral infection of the respiratory tract and spreads easily from person to person via respiratory droplets when coughing and sneezing. Symptoms appear rapidly and include fever, muscle aches, headache, malaise (feeling unwell), cough, sore throat and a runny nose. In healthy individuals, symptoms improve without treatment within two to seven days. Severe illness is more common in those aged 65 years or over, those under 2 years of age, or those who have underlying medical conditions that increase their risk for complications of influenza.

Seasonal influenza in Tonga

Seasonal influenza occurs throughout the world. In the northern hemisphere (including the UK), most influenza occurs from as early as October through to March. In the southern hemisphere, influenza mostly occurs between April and September. In the tropics, influenza can occur throughout the year.

Prevention

All travellers should:

- Avoid close contact with symptomatic individuals
- Avoid crowded conditions where possible
- Wash their hands frequently
- Practise 'cough hygiene': sneezing or coughing into a tissue and promptly discarding it safely, and washing their hands
- Avoid travel if unwell with influenza-like symptoms
- A vaccine is available in certain circumstances (see below)*

***In the UK, seasonal influenza vaccine is offered routinely each year to those at higher risk of developing of severe disease following influenza infection, and certain additional groups such as healthcare workers and children as part of the UK national schedule (see [information on vaccination](#)). For those who do not fall into these groups, vaccination may be available privately.**

If individuals at higher risk of severe disease following influenza infection are travelling to a country when influenza is likely to be circulating they should ensure they received a flu vaccination in the previous 12 months.

The vaccine used in the UK protects against the strains predicted to occur during the winter months of the northern hemisphere. It is not possible to obtain vaccine for the southern hemisphere in the UK, but the vaccine used during the UK influenza season should still provide important protection against strains likely to occur during the southern hemisphere influenza season, and in the tropics.

Avian influenza

Avian influenza viruses can rarely infect and cause disease in humans. Such cases are usually associated with close exposure to infected bird or animal populations. Where appropriate, information on these will be available in the outbreaks and news sections of the relevant country pages. Seasonal influenza vaccines will not provide protection against avian influenza.

[Avian influenza in brief](#)

Outdoor air quality

Poor air quality is a significant public health problem in many parts of the world. Exposure to high levels of air pollution over short time periods (e.g. minutes/hours/days) and longer time periods (e.g. years) is linked to many different acute and chronic health problems. These effects are mainly on the respiratory (lungs and airways) and cardiovascular (heart function and blood circulation) systems.

Current information on world air quality is available from the [world air quality index project](#).

Prevention

Travellers with health problems that might make them more vulnerable to the effects of air pollution who are travelling to areas of high pollution should:

- discuss their travel plans with their doctor, and carry adequate supplies of their regular medication
- take sensible precautions to minimise their exposure to high levels of air pollution
- check local air quality data and amend their activities accordingly
- take notice of any health advisories published by the local Ministry of Health and Department for Environment, and follow the guidance provided.

It is unclear if face masks are beneficial at reducing exposure and may make breathing more difficult for those with pre-existing lung conditions. Those who choose to use one should make sure that the mask fits well and know how to wear it properly.

[Outdoor air quality 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, ZIKV is a cause of Congenital Zika Syndrome (microcephaly and other congenital anomalies) and neurological complications such as Guillain-Barré syndrome.

Zika virus in Tonga

There is a risk of ZIKV in this country. Details of specific affected areas within this country are not available. **Pregnant women should consider avoiding travel** to this country until after the pregnancy. In the event that travel is unavoidable, the pregnant traveller must be informed of the risks which ZIKV presents.

Prevention

- All travellers should avoid mosquito bites particularly between dawn and dusk.
- There is no vaccination or medication to prevent ZIKV infection.

- Women should avoid becoming pregnant while travelling in this country, and for 2 months (8 weeks) after their last possible ZIKV exposure* (see below if male partner has travelled).
- If a woman develops symptoms compatible with ZIKV infection, it is recommended she avoids becoming pregnant for a further 2 months following recovery.
- Pregnant women who visited this country while pregnant, or who become pregnant within 2 months after their last possible ZIKV exposure*, should contact their GP, obstetrician or midwife for further advice, even if they have not been unwell.

Please note screening of returning travellers without ZIKV symptoms is not available on the NHS. Couples planning pregnancy in the very near future should consider whether they should avoid travel to a country or area with risk of ZIKV, rather than delay conception for the recommended period (see below) after travel. This particularly includes couples in assisted fertility programmes.

Prevention of sexual transmission

Couples should follow [guidance on prevention of sexual transmission of ZIKV](#) and avoid conception as follows:

- If both partners travelled, for 3 months after last possible ZIKV exposure*
- Male traveller only, for 3 months after last possible ZIKV exposure*
- Female traveller only, for 2 months after last possible ZIKV exposure*

See [further information for pregnant women, their partners and couples planning pregnancy](#).

***Last possible Zika virus exposure is defined as the later of either the date of leaving a country or area with risk for ZIKV transmission, or the date on which unprotected sexual contact with a potentially infectious partner took place.**

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

[Zika virus in brief](#)

Covid-19

COVID-19 disease is caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV2. The main symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of a new continuous cough and/or a high temperature and/or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell. Symptoms range from mild to life-threatening. Older people and those with underlying health problems are more likely to develop severe disease. Current evidence also shows that there is a higher risk of infection and of severe disease in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups in the UK. The reasons for this are currently not clear.

The virus is mainly transmitted from human to human by breathing in droplets from the nose or mouth of an infected person or by touching the infected droplets on surfaces, then touching the eyes, nose or mouth. A COVID-19 vaccine is now available in some countries, but even if vaccinated, prevention still relies on strict attention to social distancing guidance and personal and respiratory hygiene.

Travellers should always check the UK [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office \(FCDO\) travel advice](#) and their [country-specific pages](#) for the latest COVID-19 travel advisories which may include information on travel restrictions, quarantine or COVID-19 testing requirements. This includes considering the recommendations and requirements for any transit countries. Travellers should be aware that case numbers in individual countries/areas can increase rapidly and country requirements can change at short notice. They should check this page and FCDO travel advice regularly for updates.

Covid-19 In Tonga

Based on currently available information, there is a low risk of exposure to COVID-19 in this country.

All travellers should check the FCDO travel advice and be aware of the potential risks and changes in COVID-19 disease patterns.

Individuals entering or returning to the UK may be required to follow additional [UK border measures](#) including self-isolation.

Prevention

If travelling to this country, travellers should:

- Consider the risk at all destinations including any transit countries and the risk during travel itself.
- Check with the airline/tour operator about physical distancing measures or other measures in place to reduce risk during travel.
- Follow the latest social distancing guidance, including any local requirements and maintain good hand, respiratory, and personal hygiene at all times. This may be particularly important if staying with friends and family.
- Complete the full COVID-19 vaccination schedule when offered this as part of the UK vaccination programme.

See [guidance on factors to consider when assessing the risk of COVID-19 for travellers](#).

If travellers develop COVID-19 symptoms while abroad, they should:

- Follow local guidelines on self-isolation, testing and avoiding travel.
- Contact their travel insurance provider.
- Seek medical advice if needed.

[COVID-19 in brief](#)

[Latest News](#)

[Latest Outbreaks](#)