Caribbean Islands (Netherlands)

Caribbean Islands (Netherlands) include: Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius, and Sint Maarten

Capital City: ""  
Official Language: "Dutch"  
Monetary Unit: "Various"

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
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

Please read the information below carefully, as certificate requirements may be relevant to certain travellers only. For travellers further details, if required, should be sought from their healthcare professional.

There is no risk of yellow fever on these islands, however, there are certificate requirements as listed below:

- **Bonaire, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten and Curacao**: Under International Health Regulations, a certificate of yellow fever vaccination is required from travellers over 6 months of age arriving from countries with risk of yellow fever transmission. Infants from 6 months may be vaccinated when the risk of yellow fever is high (expert opinion should be sought in these situations). According to World Health Organization (WHO), from 11 July 2016 (for all countries), the yellow fever certificate will be valid for the duration of the life of the person vaccinated. As a consequence, a valid certificate, presented by arriving travellers, cannot be rejected on the grounds that more than ten years have passed since the date vaccination became effective as stated on the certificate; and that boosters or revaccination cannot be required. See WHO Q&A.
- **Aruba** have not stated their yellow fever vaccination certificate requirements.
- Due to an outbreak of yellow fever in Brazil 2017, country certificate requirements may be updated at short notice. Please check Pan American Health Organisation for updated or additional requirements for the international certificate of vaccination or prophylaxis.
- View the WHO list of countries with risk of yellow fever transmission.
- See also: Saint Martin (France)

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.

**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 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 Netherlands (Caribbean Islands)**

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.

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.

Bat Lyssavirus in Caribbean Islands (Netherlands)

Rabies has not been reported in domestic or wild animals 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 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 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

- 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.

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.

Rabies in brief

Other risks

The risk below may be present in all or part of the country.

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 forms 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 Netherlands (Caribbean Islands)

Dengue is known or has the potential to occur in this country.

Prevention

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

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 Caribbean Islands (Netherlands): Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba and Sint Eustatius

These islands are considered to have a high risk of ZIKV transmission. Pregnant women are advised to postpone non-essential travel until after pregnancy. Details of specific affected areas are not available.

Zika virus in Caribbean Islands (Netherlands): Sint Maarten

This island is considered to have a moderate risk of Zika virus transmission. Pregnant women should consider postponing non-essential travel until after the pregnancy. Details of specific affected areas within this country are not available.

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 high risk of ZIKV transmission should postpone non-essential travel until after pregnancy.
• It is recommended that pregnant women planning to travel to areas with a moderate risk of ZIKV transmission should postpone 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 recovery.
• 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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