

17 Dec 2018

## Travelling to Panama for the 2019 World Youth Day?

### Travel health advice for World Youth Day in Panama City, January 2019

An expected half a million young people are expected to travel to Panama City for [World Youth Day](#) which is due to take place from 22 January to 27 January 2019.

Panama City is the capital city of Panama, located at the Pacific entrance of the Panama Canal, in Panama state. Most events for World Youth Day are to take place on the [Cinta Costera](#); with [other sites](#) identified.

The [European Centre for Disease prevention and Control](#) (ECDC) is advising travellers plan ahead, as there will be large crowds and particular health risks associated with mass gatherings.

ECDC have reported an increase in the number of [hantavirus](#) (Choclo virus) cases in Los Santos Province in the south of the country during 2018 [1]. This Province is not at the site of the World Youth Day events, but it is likely that some participants will be planning onward travel before or after the event. Hantaviruses are a group of viruses that are carried by some rodents and may be transmitted to people through direct contact with the rodents or their urine and droppings. ECDC report that the risk of hantavirus is considered low for World Youth Day participants, but outdoor activities such as camping or hiking in the affected area can increase the risk of exposure [1].

### Advice for travellers

Check our [Panama Country Information page](#) for current vaccine, malaria and other health advice and see your GP, practice nurse or travel clinic to check you are in date for all appropriate travel and routine vaccines including [Mumps, Measles and Rubella \(MMR\) vaccinations](#).

Obtain appropriate [travel insurance](#); remember that a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is NOT valid in Panama.

Take a basic first aid kit containing diarrhoea treatment, pain relief, gauze, antiseptic, tape and plasters. Carry a good supply of any prescription and/or over the counter medicines in your hand luggage. See our [Medicines and Travel](#) factsheet for more advice.

It is summer time in Panama, so remember to drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids and [protect yourself from the sun](#) with clothes, sun glasses and high factor sun screen.

Insects can also be a pest - as well as bites causing irritation; they can spread diseases like Zika, malaria, dengue and yellow fever. Further information on these diseases can be found in the disease in brief area of our website. Vaccination against yellow fever is recommended for some travellers to Panama, see our Panama page for more information and discuss further with your [local yellow fever vaccination centre](#). Reduce your risk by using good insect bite avoidance measures day and night.

Follow [food and water hygiene advice](#) and wash your hands after visiting the toilet and before preparing or eating food. Alcohol gel is useful when hand-washing is not possible. Be prepared to manage [traveller's diarrhoea](#).

Check our [general travel health advice](#) and if you are travelling without a steady partner, be aware of the risks of sexually transmitted infections. Casual sex abroad often happens, even when it is not planned. Reliable condoms should be carried and used to reduce the risks.

Make sure you know the latest [travel advice](#) for Panama by signing up for [FCO email alerts](#).

## Resources

- [Personal safety](#)
- [FCO: Travel Aware](#)
- [World Youth Day](#)
- [World Youth Day – Frequently Asked Questions](#)

## References

1. [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, World Youth Day 2019 – information for travellers, 14 December 2019, \[Accessed 17 December 2019\].](#)