Chile

Risk Ratings

LOW MEDICAL RISK for Chile

Risk Summary

 Petty crime constitutes the main travel risk in Chile, particularly in the capital Santiago, albeit low by regional standards. Higher-risk areas of Santiago are Cerro San Cristóbal Park, Cerro Santa Lucia Hill and crowded markets and streets in the city centre. Plaza de Armas and the metro are frequented by pickpockets. The risk in the upmarket Las Condes, Vitacura and Providencia areas is minimal, though residential burglaries have been reported.

Student-led demonstrations, as well as gatherings organised by anarchist, indigenous, labour and environmental groups, occasionally turn violent, posing incidental risks to bystanders. Anarchists and indigenous groups have also been responsible for detonating improvised explosive devices (IED). However, the devices are typically homemade and not built in such a way that would suggest an intention to cause civilian casualties.

In addition, Chile is located in an active seismic zone and vulnerable to earthquakes. There are active volcanoes in southern Chile; ashes from the Puyehue volcano in June 2011 disrupted air travel for several months across Chile and neighbouring countries.

This information is intended as a summary of the travel security environment; however, the risks can change at short notice during a crisis or evolving situation. Please check our travel security alerts to ensure you are informed of the most recent developments.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

Alerts

Urban centres: Anticipate, avoid further protests over killing of indigenous man

Hepatitis A cases

View All Alerts

Vaccinations For Chile

Hepatitis A Recommended for all travellers and expatriates,
Read more

Hepatitis B Recommended for most travellers and expatriates,
Read more

Typhoid fever Recommended for adventurous and long-term
Read more

Routine Vaccinations

- All routine vaccinations should be current; these include Measles-Mumps-Rubella, Polio, Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis, and Varicella.
- Annual influenza vaccination.

Other Medical Precautions

- Before you go - See your doctor and dentist and ensure you are in the best health before you leave. Other preparations:
- Malaria
- Zika Virus
- Health Threats

Before You Go

See your doctor and dentist and ensure you are in the best health before you leave. Other preparations:

- Check your routine vaccinations
  Check your routine vaccinations are up to date (polio; varicella; measles, mumps and rubella; tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, seasonal influenza). See a travel health practitioner 6 to 8 weeks before departure for destination-specific health preparations. You may need additional vaccinations, some of which require several doses, or be recommended malaria medication which may need to be started a week or more before arriving in the malarial country.

- Documentation: Arrange a copy of your personal health record to carry with you when you travel. Include a letter from your doctor explaining your need for all medications you are carrying, including any over-the-counter medications, in English and the language of your destination(s). Make sure you have copies of your prescriptions.

- Medication: Check the regulations of your destination country regarding importation of your medication, as some drugs may be strictly prohibited (especially narcotics and psychotropics) and may result in severe penalties. Take any medicines you require in their original packaging, including any information leaflets,
Vaccinations for Chile

Recommendations may vary for short-term visitors. Always consult your travel health advisor or contact International SOS to discuss your specific needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hepatitis A</th>
<th>Recommended for all travellers and expatriates, especially:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● For long-term or frequent visitors.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● For adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations or stay in areas with poor sanitation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● For men who have sex with men, people who use illicit drugs or those with liver disease.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hepatitis B</th>
<th>Recommended for most travellers and expatriates, especially:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● For long-term or frequent visitors, and health-care workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● For adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● If possibility of new sexual partner, needle sharing, acupuncture, dental work, body piercing or tattooing during visit.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travelers, regardless of destination.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Typhoid fever</th>
<th>Recommended for adventurous and long-term travellers, especially those who will:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Visit friends and relatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Eat from local vendors or restaurants.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Be exposed to conditions of poor sanitation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Visit smaller cities or rural areas.</td>
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Malaria

There is no malaria in Chile.

Zika Virus

There is no Zika Virus in Chile.

Standard of Care

Emergency Response

Always try to call International SOS whenever medical care or advice is required, especially in emergencies.

Public ambulance services are not recommended as they may not be properly equipped. Selected private hospitals and clinics provide limited ambulance services to transport patients to their facilities.

It is often best to take a patient to a clinic or hospital in a private vehicle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Standard of Health Care

Let International SOS assist you.

International SOS will assist you to find suitable inpatient or outpatient care, will provide language assistance and may be able to pay your medical expenses.

Inpatient care

Selected government and private hospitals in Santiago and other major cities provide medical care of an international standard.

Many doctors have completed training outside of Chile. Most will speak English and some speak German.

OutPatient Care

Private hospitals are recommended for outpatient care as they generally have shorter wait times and multi-lingual medical staff or interpreters.

Specialty care can be accessed through a general practitioner or private hospital outpatient departments.

Paying for Health Care
Payment is expected at the time of service. Cash is preferred, some medical facilities may accept credit cards or electronic payments.

Do not defer medical treatment because of financial concerns. Contact International SOS, and if our terms allow, we will make financial arrangements on your behalf.

**Dental Care**

High quality dental services are available in Santiago and other larger cities.

**Blood Supplies**

The blood supply in Chile is safe. Only voluntary donors are used and blood is screened according to international standards.

Even in areas where the blood supply is considered safe, it's best to avoid blood transfusions if possible. Screening cannot detect every blood-borne disease, and immune reactions can vary from minor to life-threatening. If a blood transfusion is recommended and circumstances permit, seek a second opinion from International SOS or your health advisor.

**Medication Availability**

Most medications are available in Chile and the quality is well controlled by government regulations.

Some medications, including some benzodiazepines, are prohibited by law in Chile.

Since brand names vary, know the generic (chemical) names of your medications. It is always advisable to bring an adequate supply of prescription and other medications from your home country. Check the expiration date on all medications.

**Clinics & Hospitals**

**Medical Providers**

No matter where you are, contact International SOS first if you are sick, injured or need medical advice.

Our medical staff will advise you, help you select the correct doctor, hospital or clinic, and make any necessary appointments on your behalf. If our terms allow, we will also make financial arrangements for you.

It is recommended that you contact International SOS before accessing medical care in Chile

**Hospitals / Clinics**

If you are unable to contact International SOS, the following list of hospitals and clinics is provided in case of medical emergencies.

**Santiago de Chile**

**Clínica Alemana**

Category: Hospital  
Address: Vitacura 5951  
Santiago de Chile, Santiago NA  
Telephone: 56 2 2210 1111/ 22910 1111  
56 22 210 1334

**Clínica Las Condes**

Category: Hospital  
Address: Lo Fontecilla 441  
Edificio C 3  
Santiago de Chile, Santiago NA  
Telephone: 56 2 2210 4000

**Food & Water**

**Food and Water Precautions**

Travellers have a small risk of developing diarrhoea in any country. It may be advisable to drink bottled water only, especially on short trips. Always wash your hands with soap before eating, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. See the following country-specific recommendations:

**Water and Beverages**

Tap water is unsafe.

- Drink only bottled or boiled water or carbonated drinks.
- Avoid ice, as it may have been made from unsterile water.

**Food Risk**

Food-borne illnesses may occur. To reduce your risk:

- Food served in larger hotels and well-known restaurants should be safe.
- Busier restaurants may be safer as they are more likely to serve freshly cooked food.
- Always choose food that has been freshly cooked and is served hot.
- Avoid food that has been stored warm – such as in a “bain marie.”
- Avoid raw foods, shellfish, pre-peeled fruit and salad.
• Fruit that you wash and peel yourself is safe.
• Avoid street vendors and market food because the standard of hygiene may be low and food may not be fresh.

More on food and water safety

Health Threats

Health threats present include:

Travelers' diarrhea | Threat from: Food and/or water

Travellers' diarrhea is the most common travel-related illness. It usually occurs within the first week away from home. It is spread through contaminated food and water.

Prevention is through choosing safe food and water, and paying attention to hygiene. Select food that is thoroughly cooked while fresh and served hot. Avoid undercooked or raw meat, fish or shellfish. Avoid salad and raw vegetables unless you can wash them with clean (treated) water and you peel them yourself.

Unless you are certain that the tap water is drinkable - choose bottled water and beverages, avoid ice.

Chile
There is high risk for travelers' diarrhea when staying outside of first class hotels and tourist resorts.

Dengue fever | Threat from: Bites and Stings

Dengue, or "break-bone" fever, is a viral disease of the tropics and sub-tropics. It is transmitted by the Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus mosquitoes that bite during the daytime and are found in and around human habitation. Symptoms include high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain. A rash often follows. The acute illness can last up to ten days, but complete recovery can take two to four weeks.

Occasionally, a potentially fatal form of dengue called severe dengue (previously known as dengue hemorrhagic fever or DHF) occurs. Severe dengue is mostly seen in persons who have been previously infected with dengue - the fatality rate is about 2.5%.

Prevention is through preventing mosquito bites. A dengue vaccine, Dengvaxia, is available in several countries however it is not recommended for people who have never had dengue infection. It should only be used in people who have previously been infected with dengue. Hence, travelers who have already had the disease or are seropositive and planning to visit areas with high transmission can consider vaccination in consultation with a travel health specialist.

Chile
Dengue outbreaks have been reported in Easter Island.

Rabies | Threat from: Animals

Rabies is a viral disease contracted when bitten or scratched by an infected (rabid) animal, often a dog. Once it enters the body, the virus travels along nerves and causes paralysis. As it reaches important organs like the spinal cord and the brain, it causes coma and death.

In countries where rabies is present in animals or bats, ALL animal / bat bites, scratches and licks to broken skin must be treated seriously. Rabies vaccination is very effective in preventing rabies, even after a bite/scratch by a rabid animal.

Rabies vaccination
Pre-exposure vaccination is often recommended for expatriates and long-term visitors to destinations where rabies is present. It's especially recommended if quality medical care may not be available after being bitten or scratched by an animal. Pre-exposure treatment can be especially useful for children, since they may not tell their parents that they have been bitten/scratched.

Pre-exposure vaccination makes it easier to treat a bite or scratch. That's important because some types of rabies treatment can be in short supply in many countries, even in cities.

If bitten, scratched or licked (on broken skin) by an animal:

• Immediately cleanse the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.
• Seek medical advice from a qualified source or your assistance company.
• Notify local health authorities immediately. You may need post-exposure vaccination, even if you have had pre-exposure vaccination. (THIS CAN BE LIFE SAVING.)

Chile
Rabies is generally present in wild animals, including bats, and the risk of exposure for average travellers is low.

Typhoid fever | Threat from: Food and/or water

Typhoid fever is a serious infection caused by a type of salmonella bacteria spread by contaminated food or water. Choosing safe food and water will greatly reduce the risk of developing the disease.

Symptoms usually begin one to three weeks after exposure. Although typhoid fever is often called a diarrheal disease, some patients do not have diarrhea. Persistent, high fever is typical. Other early symptoms are flu-like: body aches and pains, weakness, loss of appetite and a continuous dull headache. A rash with pink spots may appear on the chest and abdomen of some patients. In severe cases, perforation of the bowel can cause severe bleeding or infection in the abdomen, which can be fatal.

Typhoid is cured with antibiotic treatment. Preventive vaccinations are available.
Hepatitis A | Threat from: Food and/or water

Hepatitis A is a viral disease that causes liver inflammation. The virus is present in the faeces of an infected person. It spreads through contaminated food and water, and is common in areas with poor sanitation. Person-to-person spread also occurs, when the virus is inadvertently transferred into the mouth, including during sexual activity. People at higher risk of infection include men who have sex with men, illicit drug users and people with liver disease.

Symptoms begin on average 28 days after exposure (range 2 to 8 weeks), and include fever, chills, fatigue, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, dark urine and jaundice (yellow colour of the skin and eyes). Many infected people suffer only a mild illness. Most cases recover fully after four or more weeks. However for some, the disease can be severe, and occasionally is fatal. There is no specific treatment and cases are managed through supportive therapy.

Prevention is through vaccination, attention to hygiene, and access to safe food and water.

HIV, Hepatitis B and C, & STIs | Threat from: Sex/needle sharing

HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C are spread by contact with bodily fluids (especially blood and semen).

- unprotected sex,
- needle sharing during IV drug use, or
- unsafe blood or medical/dental instruments.

Genital herpes (HSV), genital warts (HPV), gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and most other sexually transmitted diseases are spread by genital contact.

Prevention:

- In many countries, hepatitis B is now a routine childhood immunisation and need not be repeated. All non-immune travellers should consider vaccination.
- Always use new condoms (preferably brought from your home country).
- IV drug users should not share needles.
- Avoid having tattoos or piercings done.
- In healthcare settings, make sure that needles and syringes sterile and not shared between patients.
- Call International SOS or your corporate medical department if you are hospitalised.
- Be aware of your risk when assisting anyone with an injury. Protect yourself from contact with bodily fluids.
- Seek medical attention within 24 hours if you accidentally come into contact with someone else's bodily fluids.

Hantaviruses | Threat from: Animals

Hantaviruses are a group of viruses that belong to the bunyaviridae family. They can cause two different types of illness in humans: hemorrhagic fever with renal failure syndrome (HFRS) and hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS). The latter also known as hantavirus cardiopulmonary syndrome (HCPS). It is a widely distributed disease and occurs across Americas, Europe and Asia.

Regardless of which illness they cause, hantaviruses are carried by infected rodents that can carry the virus for their entire lives without any signs of illness. Virus is present in the animal's saliva, urine, and feces. Humans become sick when they inhale the aerosol droplets of these excretions.

Although not clearly known, symptoms of HCPS appear about one to eight weeks after exposure to the virus. Early symptoms include fatigue, fever, and muscle aches. About 50 percent of all patients also experience headache, dizziness, and abdominal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, pain). Later symptoms are cough/shorthness of breath and a feeling of overall tightness in the chest. Heartbeat and breathing may both become rapid at this stage. Most people recover from the disease. The overall case fatality rate is about 30 percent, and most deaths occur rapidly - within 24 hours of hospitalization.

The incubation period for HFRS is usually 2 to 4 weeks, but could be as short as a few days. Patients usually experience a fever that begins suddenly, headache, muscle pain, gastrointestinal upset, eye pain and blurred vision. Patients may later develop hemorrhage, including bleeding from the skin, conjunctiva of the eye, and mouth. Complications include kidney failure. Most patients fully recover. The overall mortality ranges from 5-15 percent, depending on the strain of the virus.

The best way to avoid infection is to eliminate rodents from your living space and worksite, and/or avoid contact with them. Keep food tightly contained, clean dishes immediately after use, do not leave pet food out all day, and seal holes to the outside – generally, make your environment inhospitable to rodents. When in an area known to be infested with rodents, avoid activities that can stir up dust, like vacuuming or sweeping, as there may be virus-containing rodent feces, urine, or saliva present. Do not sit in meadows, on haystacks, or woodpiles where rodents are likely to nest.

Treatment is supportive. Ribavirin has improved the chances of surviving HFRS although its effectiveness has not been proven in HCPS. A vaccine is available to protect against certain viruses that cause HFRS, most especially those that are prevalent in mainland China.

Chile

Cases of Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome occur annually.

Air Pollution | Threat from: Environment

Poor air quality, also known as "haze", "smog" and "air pollution", can negatively impact one's health. Some groups are especially vulnerable to problems caused by polluted air. These include children, the elderly and anyone with underlying chronic health problems such as heart disease, emphysema, bronchitis or asthma.

The chemicals in polluted air can affect the lungs resulting in wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath and even pain. Polluted air can also irritate the eyes and nose, and may interfere with immune system function. Long-term exposure can result in reduced lung function, particularly in children. It can also lead to lung cancer.

Limiting exposure to polluted air is the best way to avoid these problems. When air quality is poor, it may be advisable to avoid outdoor physical activities. While inside, keep doors and windows closed, and use an air conditioner on 'recirculate' if possible. If the air quality is frequently problematic, consider using an air cleaner. During particularly bad periods, you may want to wear a mask while outside. Ask your healthcare provider before using a mask, especially if you have underlying health conditions.

https://www.internationalsos.com/MasterPortal/PrintDisplay.aspx
Altitude | Threat from: Environment
Altitude illness is a potentially fatal condition that can affect people who normally live at a low altitude and travel to a higher altitudes. It can occur from elevations of 1,500 meters onwards, but is more common at elevations above 2,500 meters (8,000 feet).

People most at risk are those who have experienced altitude illness before, people who have heart or lung problems and people under the age of 50. There are three different types of altitude illness: Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). AMS is the most common and mild form of altitude illness. HACE and HAPE are more severe. HACE is a medical emergency and if not treated and managed quickly, can result in coma and death. Management of altitude illnesses involves immediate descent and oxygen treatment. Most people who are affected, even those who develop HACE or HAPE, recover completely if moved to a lower elevation. There are medicines that can be administered by trained medical professionals.

Anyone travelling to high altitude, especially higher than 2,500 meters, should be aware of and recognise the symptoms of altitude illness. See your travel health professional before departure, for individual advice on preventive measures, especially if you have ever suffered altitude sickness in the past, or if you have an underlying medical condition.

Earthquake | Threat from: Environment
Earthquakes can occur globally, but are particularly prone to happen around the Pacific Ring of Fire. They can strike without warning and be violent enough to destroy buildings.

Be prepared by having a plan, contact list and emergency supplies, such as food, water, medicines and first aid kit, clothing, cash and documents. Know the escape routes and identify hazards (i.e. tall bookshelves, loose items) and safe places (i.e. under a table or next to a sturdy inner wall). During an earthquake: drop, cover and hold on. Protect your eyes with your arms. If you are indoors take cover, stay away from windows and exit the building once the shaking has stopped. If you are outside, move away from buildings or structures which may fall down.

Following an earthquake, aftershocks are possible, which can be strong enough to further damage already weakened structures. There may also be risk of tsunamis, avalanches, fires and floods. Know the risks of injury from damaged infrastructure, choose safe food and water, prevent illness and protect against potential disease outbreaks.

See the [CDC Earthquakes page](https://www.cdc.gov/earthquakes).