Croatia

Risk Ratings

LOW MEDICAL RISK for Croatia

Risk Summary

Overall crime levels are low and street crime is less of a problem than in other countries of the region. Nevertheless, petty opportunistic crime, such as pickpocketing, poses a risk in the capital Zagreb and in tourist resorts along the Adriatic coast. The police are generally helpful and professional but few speak English.

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

There are no active alerts for Croatia

Vaccinations For Croatia

Hepatitis A Recommended for all travellers and expatriates,
Read more

Hepatitis B Recommended for most travellers and expatriates,
Read more

Rabies Consider for certain travellers, especially: For
Read more

Tickborne encephalitis May be recommended for those visiting forests,
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, with them clearly labelled with your name (matching your passport name), and your doctor’s name. Have enough to cover the trip, and extra in case of delays, however note that many destinations limit quantities of certain drugs to a 30-day supply. Carry medication in your hand luggage, with copies of your prescriptions.

Vaccinations for Croatia

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

Hepatitis A
**Recommended for all travellers and expatriates, especially:**
- For long-term or frequent visitors.
- For adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations or stay in areas with poor sanitation.
- For men who have sex with men, people who use illicit drugs or those with liver disease.

**Hepatitis B**

**Recommended for most travellers and expatriates, especially:**
- For long-term or frequent visitors, and health-care workers.
- For adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations.
- If possibility of new sexual partner, needle sharing, acupuncture, dental work, body piercing or tattooing during visit.

Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travelers, regardless of destination.

**Rabies**

**Consider for certain travellers, especially:**
- For expatriates and long-term visitors.
- For children who tend to play with animals and may not admit to being bitten or scratched.
- If you are travelling to a location where quality medical care may not be available immediately after being bitten/scratched by an animal.
  (Unvaccinated people need immunoglobulin within 24 hours of an animal injury, and this medication is scarce in some countries. If you are pre-vaccinated, you do not need this immunoglobulin after an injury.)
- If contact with dogs, monkeys or other potentially rabies-carrying animals is likely. Jogging increases your risk of dog bite.

**Tickborne encephalitis**

May be recommended for those visiting forests, fields or pastures during the summer tick season or who drink unpasteurized milk.

**Malaria**

There is no malaria in Croatia.

**Zika Virus**

There is no Zika Virus in Croatia.

**Standard of Care**

**Emergency Response**

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

Use the public ambulance service for medical emergencies. They are staffed with certified nurses and physicians and respond quickly in city areas. Response time may be slow in rural areas. Most ambulance staff will not speak English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>192</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>193</td>
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<td>Police</td>
<td>194</td>
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**Standard of Health Care**

**Let International SOS assist you.**

International SOS will assist you to find appropriate emergency, inpatient or outpatient care, will provide language assistance, may be able to pay your medical expenses and will assist with evacuation when required.

**Inpatient care**

Selected government and/or university hospitals provide appropriate medical care.

Many staff will speak German and some speak English. Wait times may be long and communication and customer service issues are possible. Private facilities are not recommended for inpatient care.

**OutPatient Care**

Selected private facilities provide a high level of general and specialist outpatient care. More complex outpatient issues will be referred to government/university hospitals. A good level of hygiene and customer service can be expected and most staff will speak English.

Private facilities are not open 24 hours, do not handle emergency cases, and are not recommended for inpatient care.

**Paying for Health Care**

Hospitals and health-care providers may require payment before medical services are performed; in emergency cases billing issues are usually resolved after the treatment.
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

Selected private dentists in Croatia offer a high standard of care.

Blood Supplies

Blood products are safe; Croatia has rigorous control procedures that follow 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

Selected private pharmacies stock a good range of medication. Only prescriptions written in Croatian will be accepted. Public hospitals and clinics may have a more limited supply. All pharmacists are university graduates and must have a current license. They are trained to offer advice on the use and dosage of prescription and non-prescription medication.

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 Croatia.

Hospitals / Clinics

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

Zagreb

Klinicka Bolnica Dubrava

Category: Hospital
Address: Avenija Gojka Suska 6
Zagreb, Zagreb 10000
Telephone: 385 (0)1 290 2444

University Hospital KBC

Category: Hospital
Address: Kispaliovica 12 (Rebro Center)
Zagreb, NA 10000
Telephone: 385 (0)1 2388 888

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 safe.

Food Risk

Food is generally safe. It may be wise to avoid street vendor food.

More on food and water safety

Health Threats

Health threats present include:

Travelers’ diarrhoea | Threat from : Food and/or water

Travellers’ diarrhoea 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.
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.)

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.

West Nile Virus | Threat from: Bites and Stings

Primarily a disease of birds, West Nile virus (WNV) can infect humans. The most common route for a human infection is via mosquitoes. The mosquito feeds on an infected bird or other animal, then bites a human and introduces the virus into their body.

Most people who get WNV develop no symptoms. Of the 20 percent who do get ill, most develop mild symptoms 3-14 days after being bitten: fever, head and body ache, nausea and vomiting. Sometimes the lymph nodes swell or a rash appears on the trunk.

In fewer than one percent of all human cases, the person develops a serious, possibly fatal, infection. Symptoms may include high fever, headache, stiff neck, disorientation, muscle weakness, tremors and paralysis. The brain and membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord may get inflamed, which can cause coma and death. Patients who recover from a serious WNV infection may suffer permanent brain damage.

There is no specific treatment for the disease, or vaccine to protect against it. To avoid infection, prevent mosquito bites in areas where the virus circulates. Wear long sleeves and long pants, and use insect repellents.

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The virus is known to be present in animals, especially horses and cattle. Human cases were first detected in 2012 in Vukovar-Syrmia region. The risk of WNV transmission typically runs from June to November.

HIV, Hepatitis B and C, & STIs | Threat from: Sex/blood/needles

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.

https://www.internationalsos.com/MasterPortal/PrintDisplay.aspx 4/6
- 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.

**Tickborne encephalitis | Threat from: Bites and Stings**

The virus is mainly transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected tick. Ticks are usually found at the edge of forests and in clearings, long grass and hedges and are more common in the summer months. Often, the bite goes unnoticed. Infection can also be acquired by consuming unpasteurized dairy products from infected cows, goats or sheep.

About 14 days after the tick bite, the patient suffers fever, headache, muscle aches, nausea and fatigue. The symptoms usually resolve in a week or so, but up to one third of patients develop a second, more severe illness. Symptoms may include severe headaches, decreased mental state, convulsions, weakness and/or coma. These symptoms indicate that the virus is affecting the brain. About one percent of cases are fatal. Fortunately, only one out of 250 people who get infected with the virus actually becomes ill.

To prevent infection, it is important to prevent tick bites, especially as most travelers have not been vaccinated.

- Wear long pants with tight cuffs, and tuck pant legs into socks.
- Use insect repellent containing DEET.
- Consider soaking or spraying your clothes with the insecticide permethrin. (Do not apply permethrin directly to the skin.)
- After visiting a forest or pasture, search for ticks on your body and clothing. If a tick is found, remove it gently using tweezers.

A safe, effective vaccine is available in Canada, Europe and the UK. It is not available in the U.S. The vaccine is given routinely to populations living in infected areas of Europe and Russia. However, the CDC does not generally recommend its use for travelers. Travelers at high-risk of exposure should consult their travel health practitioners for an individual recommendation on vaccination.

**Croatia** Risk in the northern part of the country, below 1400m, between the Sava and Drava rivers.

**Lyme disease | Threat from: Bites and Stings**

Lyme disease occurs in North America, Europe and Asia. It is transmitted to humans by the bite of a particular species of tick. Lyme disease can cause an expanding rash at the site of the bite, fever, arthritis and nerve problems such as facial palsy.

To prevent tick bites:

- Avoid tick habitats
- Use insect repellents
- Check daily for ticks

Lyme disease vaccination is no longer available.

If you develop a rash at the site of a tick bite or other symptoms of Lyme disease, seek medical attention. A course of antibiotics can cure Lyme disease.

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The disease was first documented in humans in 1986. Health authorities required reporting of cases in 1991. Adults are mostly affected though some cases are seen in children. Cases occur most commonly in the Northwest region, particularly between the months of May and August.

**Leishmaniais | Threat from: Bites and Stings**

**Leishmaniasis** is a disease caused by a parasite that can infect humans, dogs, rodents and other small animals. It is transmitted by sandflies that bite mainly between dusk and dawn and can occur in both rural and urban environments. Sandflies breed quickly in unsanitary conditions, and the spread of the disease is exacerbated by war, chronic food shortages and urbanisation activities like deforestation and building of dams and irrigation systems, changes in temperature, heavy rainfall and population movement. The disease can manifest in one of the three forms, cutaneous (is the most common form and causes skin ulcers), mucocutaneous (is a rare form which affects the inner parts of the nose and mouth) or visceral (which is the more severe form and can lead to death). There is no vaccine or drug to prevent leishmaniasis.

**Prevention**

The only way to avoid leishmaniasis is to prevent sandfly bites.

- Minimise outdoor activities from dusk to dawn--this is when sand flies are most active.
- Use protective clothing and insect repellent.
- Consider using an insecticide treated bed net with fine mesh if there are sandflies in your living quarters. The standard bed nets used to prevent malaria are not effective, as sandflies are about one-third the size of mosquitoes and can fly through the malaria nets.
- Note that sandflies are small and do not make noise while flying. This makes it difficult to determine whether they are in your environment. Their bites cause mild symptoms and might not be noticed.

**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). Late symptoms are cough/shortness 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.

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Hantaviruses are consistently present throughout the country except in the coastal and island regions. Most of the activity is reported during June - July.