Hong Kong (SAR)

Risk Ratings

LOW MEDICAL RISK for Hong Kong (SAR)

Alerts

Click Here for Alerts

Vaccinations For Hong Kong (SAR)

- **Hepatitis A**
  - Many travel health professionals recommend Read more

- **Hepatitis B**
  - Recommended for health care workers and anyone Read more

- **Japanese encephalitis**
  - Vaccine is recommended for people who will 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 Hong Kong (SAR)

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>Vaccination</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hepatitis A</strong></td>
<td>Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis A vaccination for all travellers regardless of destination, especially those who are at higher risk, such as men who have sex with men, people who use illicit drugs or those with liver disease.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hepatitis B</strong></td>
<td>Recommended for health care workers and anyone who may have a new sexual partner, share needles or get a tattoo or body piercing. Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travellers and expatriates, regardless of destination.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Japanese encephalitis</strong></td>
<td>Vaccine is recommended for people who will participate in 'higher risk' activities while in an area where Japanese encephalitis</td>
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Malaria

There is no malaria in Hong Kong (SAR).

Zika Virus

There is no Zika Virus in Hong Kong (SAR).

Standard of Care

Emergency Response

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

Hong Kong has an excellent public ambulance service. The ambulances are well equipped, reliable and free.

All public hospitals have an emergency department however patients are triaged so that those with the most severe medical conditions are seen first.

Private hospitals do not have an actual emergency department, but rather an "outpatient department" where patients with minor medical emergencies and common ailments can be seen. These are less crowded than public emergency departments and are recommended for urgent after-hours care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Numbers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
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<td>Fire</td>
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<td>Police</td>
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Standard of Health Care

Let International SOS assist you.

International SOS will assist you to find suitable inpatient or outpatient care 24/7, will provide language assistance and may be able to pay your medical expenses.

In-patient care

Hong Kong is a centre of medical excellence. Both public and private hospitals offer a very high standard of care.

In general, private hospitals offer more modern facilities and higher standards of customer service. They are similar to private hospitals in Western countries. A high percentage of the doctors working in the private hospitals have had overseas experience such as UK, Australia or the USA. As private hospitals do not offer all specialties and sub-specialties, some complex cases will need to be treated in public hospitals. Examples include complex neonatology, severe burns and severe psychiatric cases.

Public hospitals also provide a high standard of care, however the facilities may be older and they may offer lower levels of customer service. Most doctors will speak English but many of the nursing staff may not. Public hospitals are recommended for the severe cases that cannot be managed in private hospitals.

OutPatient Care

Private clinics and hospitals are recommended for outpatient care and are very similar to those found in Western countries. The outpatient clinics of public hospitals tend to be very crowded and are not recommended.

Facilities in the New Territories or in more remote places like Lantau may be less accessible than facilities in other parts of Hong Kong. Staff may have a bedside manner that may be uncomfortable and may not speak English.

Paying for Health Care

Medical care is expensive, especially on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon.

Foreign health insurance is often not automatically accepted in Hong Kong. However, some insurance and assistance companies may be able to make arrangements to directly pay medical expenses. When this cannot be arranged, patients may be expected to pay a deposit at the time of admission; cash or credit cards are accepted.
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 specialist and sub-specialist dental services are available. Dental surgeries are clean and efficient. Most dentists expect cash payment, although some accept credit cards. Inquire before attending the consultation.

Blood Supplies

Blood supplies are fully screened and are safe. All blood types are usually available, though Rh-ve can sometimes be in short supply.

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 Hong Kong. Pharmacies at the private hospitals have the widest range.

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 Hong Kong (SAR).

Hospitals / Clinics

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

Hong Kong

Canossa Hospital
Category: Hospital
Address: 1 Old Peak Road,
          Hong Kong, NA NA
Telephone: 852 2522 2181 (General Line)
          852 2825 5300 (admission)
          852 28252123 (for medical report)

Hong Kong Adventist Hospital - Stubbs Road
Category: Hospital
Address: 40 Stubbs Road
          Hong Kong, NA NA
Telephone: 852 3651 8888

Hong Kong Baptist Hospital
Category: Hospital
Address: 222 Waterloo Road,
          Hong Kong, NA NA
Telephone: 852 2339 8888
          852 2339 8941 (OPD)

Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital
Category: Hospital
Address: 2-4 Village Road
          Happy Valley
          Hong Kong, NA NA
Telephone: 852 2572 0211

Matilda International Hospital
Category: Hospital
Address: 41 Mount Kellett Road
          The Peak
          Hong Kong, Hong Kong NA
Telephone: 852 2849 0111
          852 2849 0746
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 for consumption.

Food Risk
Food is quite safe in Hong Kong, especially in hotels and restaurants. There are many food stalls which are also safe.

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 salads 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.

Hong Kong (SAR) Travelers diarrhea and food poisoning are uncommon.

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, travellers 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.

Japanese encephalitis | Threat from: Bites and Stings
Japanese encephalitis is serious viral illness, spread by mosquitoes. It occurs in most of Asia as well as some parts of the Western Pacific, mostly in rural agricultural areas. Although many people won't have any symptoms, it can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) with permanent brain damage, or be fatal. Prevention is through preventing mosquito bites. In addition, vaccination is recommended for travellers at higher risk.

Hong Kong (SAR)
Although rare, Japanese encephalitis occurs sporadically in Hong Kong. Almost all infections occur in rural areas, with the greatest risk in the New Territories in the months between April and October. Between 1992 and 2008, only 16 cases were reported. Since 2011, several cases have been confirmed in the New Territories, including in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long.

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 are 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.

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Tuberculosis (TB) | Threat from: Coughing/sneezing

Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious bacterial disease. The bacteria can be coughed or sneezed into the air by an infected person. Most people who contract TB have had prolonged, close, exposure to an infected person. This means they have spent days or weeks — not just a few hours — sharing the same air space with an infected person (e.g. living in the same house). People who work or live in institutions such as nursing homes or correctional facilities are also at higher risk.

Active TB causes a variety of symptoms that are sometimes vague, but often include cough, fever, night sweats, unintended weight loss and lethargy. Latent (inactive) TB causes no symptoms. Most strains of TB can be treated with antimicrobial drugs. Up to four different types of medicines may be used together to treat a patient. If left untreated, active TB can be life-threatening.

Some forms of TB have become resistant to drugs (MDR TB), and some forms are extensively resistant to drugs (XDR TB). These diseases are hard to treat. People sometimes contract MDR or XDR TB through direct contact with a person who is already infected. Or, in other cases, people with more traditional TB infections develop drug-resistant strains. This can happen if anti-TB medication is used inappropriately or stopped too soon.

Many countries where TB is common will routinely give the Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine against tuberculosis to babies or children. The BCG vaccine protects these children against severe TB. If you live in an area with higher rates of TB infection, you may also consider vaccinating children up to 16 years old if you plan to live there for 3 months or more.

Travellers and expatriates may be able to reduce their chance of contracting TB by limiting the amount of time they spend in crowded places. Avoiding people who are coughing also minimises risk. Consider TB screening of local staff who live with you – especially if you have young children in your household.

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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.

See the International SOS Air Pollution website - use your membership number to log in.

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