

Surveillance, Disease Prevention & Control Division

Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)



CARPHA's CARNIVAL PACKAGE



Carnivals in the Caribbean are world-famous festivals that unite an explosion of people, music, food, dance and costume. Thousands of visitors from all over the world come to the Caribbean to celebrate Carnival every year. Most people participate in Carnival to have fun, but the revelry is also associated with certain health risks, particularly from crime, excessive drinking, unsafe food, risky sexual activity and heat-related illness. Tropical diseases may also be common depending on the country. This brief outlines some simple precautions you can practice before, during and after your trip to stay safe and healthy during Carnival.

Before your trip:

- Schedule an appointment with your healthcare provider about vaccines recommended for your destination and any associated travel alerts. Travelers who want to reduce their risk of seasonal flu should receive the flu vaccine before the trip.
- Consider purchasing travel health insurance.
- Pack a travel health kit and include personal medication.
- Familiarize yourself with the local laws, customs and culture.
- Monitor travel warnings or alerts.
- Share a copy of your travel itinerary, passport and contact information with someone at home.

During your trip:

- Follow security and safety guidelines:
 - Where possible don't travel at night, avoid lonely areas and travel with company.
 - Avoid excessive consumption of alcohol. Don't drink and drive.
 - Exercise caution when bathing in the sea and rivers.
 - Remain alert, trust your instincts and pay close attention to your surroundings. Report any suspicious activities to the police.
 - Carry a copy of your identification on you at all times.
 - Wear light, comfortable clothes and shoes.
 - Do not wear expensive jewelry.
 - Do not carry and flash large sums of cash.
- Avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. Diseases such as Dengue, Chikungunya and Zika are currently in circulation in some Caribbean countries whilst Malaria is endemic in others.
 - Use insect repellants containing DEET (>10%), picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 on exposed skin. Apply according to manufacturer's instructions.
 - Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
 - Use air conditioning or have windows/doors securely closed or screened when indoors.
 - Sleep under mosquito nets.

- Follow food and water safety guidelines
 - Purchase food and beverages from vendors with valid food badges.
 - See overleaf for general food safety tips.
- Protect yourself from sun exposure.
 - Drink plenty of bottled water.
 - Wear a shady hat and sunglasses.
 - Carry and use lots of sunscreen.
- Reduce your risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
 - Do not engage in risky sexual activity. Use condoms each and every time.
- If you become ill during your trip:
 - Talk to a doctor or nurse especially if you have a fever.
 - Avoid contact with others while sick.

After your trip:

- If you do not feel well after your trip, you should consult your doctor. Be sure to tell your doctor about your travel, including where you went and what you did on your trip. It is also important to tell your doctor if you were bitten or scratched by an animal or insect while traveling.
- If you are pregnant and have travelled to an area with a Zika outbreak, talk to your doctor about your recent travel.
- Consult your healthcare provider if you are pregnant and develop a fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes during your trip or within 2 weeks after traveling to a country where Zika virus cases have been reported.

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General food safety tips

Eat

- Cooked food that is served hot
- Food obtained from sealed packages
- Fruits and vegetables that you have peeled or washed in safe water
- Hard-cooked eggs
- Pasteurized dairy products

Drink

- Water, sodas or soft drinks, juices that are bottled and sealed (carbonated is safer)
- Water that has been boiled, filtered or treated
- Ice made with bottled or safe water
- Hot tea or coffee
- Pasteurized milk

Don't Eat and Drink

- Food served at room temperature
- Raw or undercooked (rare) meat or fish
- Salads
- Tap water or water from an unknown source
- Ice made with tap water
- Unpasteurized milk

Influenza A (H1N1)

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused mainly by two types of viruses: Influenza A and Influenza B. The Influenza A (H1N1) virus caused an influenza (flu) pandemic in 2009. After 2009, Influenza A (H1N1) started circulating as an annual seasonal flu virus around the world, including the Caribbean.

A person who has the flu may release tiny droplets containing the virus into the air when sneezing, coughing and talking. If the droplets land on your mouth, nose or eyes; or if you touch any of these body parts after touching a contaminated object or shaking hands with someone who has the flu, you can become infected.

Main symptoms of the flu include fever, headache, general aches and pains, tiredness or weakness and a dry, chesty cough. There are vaccines available which can be given to persons, on an annual basis and those at highest risk should get vaccinated.

The best way to prevent yourself and your loved ones from getting the flu or spreading it to others is through practicing good hygiene through:

- proper handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- covering the mouth and nose with tissue or shirt sleeve when sneezing or coughing
- the regular disinfecting and cleaning of surfaces such as door handles, telephones, etc. to get rid of germs and
- avoiding contact with others by staying at home if you are sick.

Zika virus

At February 1, 2016 locally-confirmed cases of Zika have been confirmed in 11 CARPHA Member States and Surrounding Territories: Barbados, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Martinique, Puerto Rico, Saint Martin, Suriname and US Virgin Islands.

Pregnant women should consult their healthcare provider before traveling and upon return and should stay informed about the ZIKV situation in countries they are travelling to and prevent mosquito bites by practicing the personal preventive measures stated overleaf. For more information regarding Zika virus please visit: <http://carpha.org/zika>

Keep camp sites and beaches clean!

The natural beauty and tranquillity of riversides and beaches are revered by many at this time of year. Preserve our environment.

- Collect garbage when out with relatives and friends in recreational areas and carry back home with you for disposal.
- Noise disturbs wildlife therefore do not take generators, DJ systems and bright lights into the wilderness.
- Be careful with campfires so they do not result in forest fires.