

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FROM : Permanent Secretary

TO : Permanent Secretary - Ministry of Home Affairs,
Permanent Secretary - Ministry of Tourism,
Permanent Secretary - Ministry of External Affairs,
Comptroller - Customs and Excise
Heads of Departments
Department of Environmental Health - Port Health
Head - Immigration Department

CC : Chief Medical Officer, Ministry of Health

DATE : April 13, 2017

SUBJECT : **INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS (2005)
CONCERNING YELLOW FEVER VACCINATION AND THE
ONGOING OUTBREAK IN BRAZIL**

Member countries have been alerted by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) of an ongoing outbreak of yellow fever in Brazil.

From December 2016 to March 29, 2017, Brazil has recorded 1987 cases of yellow fever and 282 deaths from the disease. In addition, the disease, though initially limited to the forested areas of Brazil, has now spread to highly populated states such as Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, which had not previously recorded cases of yellow fever.

Yellow fever can infect both humans and monkeys. In the Americas, the disease has two cycles. A sylvatic/jungle cycle where *Haemagogus* and other mosquito species spread the infection among monkeys and from monkeys to humans who visit forested areas; and an urban cycle, where the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito can spread yellow fever from person to person.

Though there is presently no evidence that the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is involved in yellow fever transmission in Brazil, the continuous spread of the disease to large cities in Brazil represents a high risk for future involvement of *Aedes aegypti* and potential rapid spread of the disease.

Yellow fever is not endemic to Saint Lucia. However, if a person who has visited or originated from a country with yellow fever enters the island whilst infected with the disease and this person is bitten by *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, the disease would spread when the yellow fever infected mosquitoes bite other persons. The evolving outbreak of yellow fever in Brazil is therefore of concern to Saint Lucia, as the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is present in Saint Lucia. This type of mosquito has been responsible for causing outbreaks of Dengue fever, Chikungunya and more recently Zika Virus Disease.

PAHO has also indicated in its Epidemiological Update on Yellow Fever (dated April 3, 2017), that Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Suriname have also reported suspected and confirmed cases in yellow fever.

In addition, the World Health Organization in Annex 1, lists all countries where yellow fever is known to exist in monkeys and or humans. It also indicates countries requirements for yellow fever vaccination of travelers.

http://www.who.int/ith/ITH_Annex_1.pdf

Yellow Fever is a disease under International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) and as such, countries may require mandatory vaccination for travelers to and from endemic countries, especially countries with ongoing yellow fever outbreaks and evidence of active disease transmission. Given the present circumstances regarding yellow fever, the Ministry of Health and Wellness recommends the following:

1. Persons travelling to or from a country where yellow fever is endemic or a **country with an outbreak must show proof of yellow fever vaccination, particularly to and from Brazil and other countries mentioned above.**

2. Increase surveillance for yellow fever viral disease, the early symptoms of which are similar to those of Dengue Fever; sudden onset of fever, chills, headache, generalized muscle pain, nausea and vomiting. The disease may progress to severe haemorrhage in 15%-20% of persons infected and about half of those severely affected die. Any suspect case in recent travelers to affected areas must be reported immediately to the health authorities.

3. Vector control measures – Yellow fever is caused by the bite of infected *Aedes* or *Haemagogus* species mosquitoes. Control measures include reducing breeding sites for mosquitoes and using personal protective measures such as protective clothing and insect repellent on skin and clothing; and through the judicious uses of insecticides.

It is important to note that all travelers from Saint Lucia to endemic countries, especially countries with current yellow fever outbreaks and evidence of active transmission, should be referred to the Castries or Vieux Fort Wellness Centers for yellow fever vaccination at least four (4) weeks prior to travel. One dose of the vaccine provides lifetime immunity in over 90% of persons after 10 days of receiving the vaccine.

Though the yellow fever vaccine is safe in the majority of persons, there are some contraindications to receiving the vaccine.

PAHO indicates that the vaccine against Yellow Fever is contraindicated in:

- people with acute febrile illnesses, depending on their general health;
- people with a history of hypersensitivity to hen's eggs and their derivatives;
- pregnant women, except in an emergency situation and following explicit recommendations of the health authorities;
- people severely immunocompromised by illness (e.g. cancer, Leukemia, AIDS, etc.) or by medicines;
- infants younger than 6 months (where no epidemics exist);
- people of any age who have a disease related to the thymus.

There is also a precaution regarding older persons:

It is recommended to individually assess the epidemiological risk of contracting yellow fever in the face of the risk of an adverse event occurring in persons over 60 years, who have not previously received the yellow fever vaccine.

It should be noted that the vaccine is not totally contraindicated in older persons.

Individual risk assessments will be performed for persons who have exemption from yellow fever vaccination or medical waivers but who have visited or originated from at-risk areas. Annex 7 in the International Health Regulations of 2005 allows for the quarantine of such unvaccinated persons (who have been to, or originated from areas with active transmission/outbreak of yellow fever).

The Ministry of Health and Wellness has recognized the need for risk assessment of yellow fever endemic countries based on the actual status of the disease in those countries. For example, it is known that Trinidad and Guyana are considered endemic countries for yellow fever. However, given reports that cases have not been documented in these countries since the 1970s, proof of yellow fever vaccination may not be required for nationals/visitors from these two countries, unless the persons have been to, or intend visiting the forested/hinterland/jungle areas in these two countries. (Note: This recommendation may change if information suggestive of active Yellow Fever transmission in Trinidad and Guyana becomes available in the near future).

The Ministry of Health and Wellness continues to thank you for your cooperation and support and remains committed to working with all partners, towards ensuring the health and well being of its citizens and visitors alike.



C. FELIX ST. HILL
Permanent Secretary

ANNEX 7

**REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING VACCINATION OR
PROPHYLAXIS FOR SPECIFIC DISEASES**

1. In addition to any recommendation concerning vaccination or prophylaxis, the following diseases are those specifically designated under these Regulations for which proof of vaccination or prophylaxis may be required for travellers as a condition of entry to a State Party:

Vaccination against yellow fever.

2. Recommendations and requirements for vaccination against yellow fever:
 - (a) For the purpose of this Annex:
 - (i) the incubation period of yellow fever is six days;
 - (ii) yellow fever vaccines approved by WHO provide protection against infection starting 10 days following the administration of the vaccine;
 - (iii) this protection continues for 10 years; and
 - (iv) the validity of a certificate of vaccination against yellow fever shall extend for a period of 10 years, beginning 10 days after the date of vaccination or, in the case of a revaccination within such period of 10 years, from the date of that revaccination.
 - (b) Vaccination against yellow fever may be required of any traveller leaving an area where the Organization has determined that a risk of yellow fever transmission is present.
 - (c) If a traveller is in possession of a certificate of vaccination against yellow fever which is not yet valid, the traveller may be permitted to depart, but the provisions of paragraph 2(h) of this Annex may be applied on arrival.
 - (d) A traveller in possession of a valid certificate of vaccination against yellow fever shall not be treated as suspect, even if coming from an area where the Organization has determined that a risk of yellow fever transmission is present.
 - (e) In accordance with paragraph 1 of Annex 6 the yellow fever vaccine used must be approved by the Organization.
 - (f) States Parties shall designate specific yellow fever vaccination centres within their territories in order to ensure the quality and safety of the procedures and materials employed.
 - (g) Every person employed at a point of entry in an area where the Organization has

determined that a risk of yellow fever transmission is present, and every member of the crew of a conveyance using any such point of entry, shall be in possession of a valid certificate of vaccination against yellow fever.

- (h) A State Party, in whose territory vectors of yellow fever are present, may require a traveller from an area where the Organization has determined that a risk of yellow fever transmission is present, who is unable to produce a valid certificate of vaccination against yellow fever, to be quarantined until the certificate becomes valid, or until a period of not more than six days, reckoned from the date of last possible exposure to infection, has elapsed, whichever occurs first.
- (i) Travellers who possess an exemption from yellow fever vaccination, signed by an authorized medical officer or an authorized health worker, may nevertheless be allowed entry, subject to the provisions of the foregoing paragraph of this Annex and to being provided with information regarding protection from yellow fever vectors. Should the travellers not be quarantined, they may be required to report any feverish or other symptoms to the competent authority and be placed under surveillance.

ANNEX 1

Countries¹ with risk of yellow fever transmission² and countries requiring yellow fever vaccination

Countries	Countries with risk of yellow fever transmission	Countries requiring yellow fever vaccination for travellers arriving from countries with risk of yellow fever transmission	Countries requiring yellow fever vaccination for travellers from all countries
Afghanistan		Yes	
Albania		Yes	
Algeria		Yes ³	
Angola	Yes		Yes
Anguilla		Yes ³	
Antigua and Barbuda		Yes	
Argentina	Yes		
Australia		Yes ³	
Bahamas		Yes ³	
Bahrain		Yes ³	
Bangladesh		Yes	
Barbados		Yes ³	
Belize		Yes	
Benin	Yes		Yes
Bhutan		Yes ³	
Bolivia, Plurinational State of	Yes	Yes ³	
Botswana		Yes ³	
Brazil	Yes		
Brunei Darussalam		Yes ³	
Burkina Faso	Yes		Yes
Burundi	Yes		Yes
Cabo Verde		Yes ³	
Cambodia		Yes ³	
Cameroon	Yes		Yes
Central African Republic	Yes		Yes
Chad	Yes	Yes	
China		Yes ³	
Christmas Island		Yes ³	
Colombia	Yes		
Congo	Yes		Yes
Costa Rica		Yes ³	

Mali	Yes		Yes
Malta		Yes	
Martinique		Yes ³	
Mauritania	Yes	Yes	
Mauritius		Yes ³	
Mayotte		Yes ³	
Mexico		Yes ³	
Montserrat		Yes	
Mozambique		Yes	
Myanmar		Yes ³	
Namibia		Yes	
Nauru		Yes	
Nepal		Yes	
Netherlands Antilles		Yes	
New Caledonia		Yes ³	
Niger	Yes		Yes
Nigeria	Yes	Yes	
Niue		Yes	
Oman		Yes ³	
Pakistan		Yes ³	
Panama	Yes		
Papua New Guinea		Yes	
Paraguay	Yes		Yes ³
Peru	Yes		
Philippines		Yes ³	
Pitcairn Islands		Yes	
Reunion		Yes ³	
Rwanda	Yes		Yes
Saint Barthelemy		Yes ³	
Saint Helena		Yes	
Saint Kitts and Nevis		Yes	
Saint Lucia		Yes	
Saint Martin		Yes ³	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		Yes	
Samoa		Yes ³	
Sao Tome and Principe		Yes ³	
Saudi Arabia		Yes ³	
Senegal	Yes	Yes ³	
Seychelles		Yes ³	
Sierra Leone	Yes		Yes
Singapore		Yes ³	
Solomon Islands		Yes	
Somalia		Yes	
South Africa		Yes ³	

South Sudan	Yes		
Sri Lanka		Yes ³	
Sudan	Yes	Yes	
Suriname	Yes	Yes	
Swaziland		Yes	
Thailand		Yes ³	
Timor-Leste		Yes	
Togo	Yes		Yes
Trinidad and Tobago	Yes (Trinidad only)	Yes ³	
Tunisia		Yes	
Uganda	Yes	Yes	
United Republic of Tanzania		Yes ³	
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Yes		
Viet Nam		Yes	
Wallis and Futuna		Yes ³	
Yemen		Yes	
Zambia		Yes ³	
Zimbabwe		Yes	

¹ For the purpose of this publication, the terms "country" and "countries" cover countries, territories and areas.

² Risk of yellow fever transmission is defined as yellow fever being currently reported or having been reported in the past and presence of vectors and animal reservoirs representing a potential risk of infection and transmission. In the 2011 edition of *International Travel and Health*, Sao Tome and Principe, the United Republic of Tanzania as well as selected areas of Eritrea, Somalia and Zambia were reclassified as "areas with low potential for exposure" for yellow fever (Country list).

³ Includes yellow fever vaccination requirement for travellers having transited through the airport of a country with risk of yellow fever transmission.