

Press Release

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Rio Olympic Games visitors urged to take 'sensible precautions' against Zika virus

Allianz Global Assistance suggests precautions Olympic Games-goers can take to reduce risks and enjoy the festivities more safely

More than 7 million tourists are about to head for Rio de Janeiro to enjoy the XXXI Olympic Games from the 5th to the 20th of August. Assistance and travel insurance specialists Allianz Worldwide Partners suggest some practical measures Olympic Games-goers can take to reduce risks to their health and safety, and help them to enjoy the Rio Olympic Games to the full.

"Visitors from all over the world will go to Brasil to celebrate Olympic values and the achievements of the most incredible champions. Most will come back home with plenty of marvellous memories but a few may have some unpleasant experiences. In order for the festivities to be unforgettable for everyone, there is a few precautions to be taken." reminds Jean-Marc Quéau, Chief Risk Officer at Allianz Worldwide Partners.

Zika and other mosquito-borne illnesses

Zika is spreading fast and, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the virus is particularly dangerous for pregnant women as it can cause birth defects. Other mosquito-transmitted illnesses present in Brazil are dengue fever and malaria. The most effective way of avoiding any of them is to protect against mosquito bites:

- apply repellents to both body and clothing;
- wear clothing that covers the arms and legs;
- stay indoors during peak mosquito hours, (early in the morning and at sunset);
- avoid areas with stagnant water;
- avoid sexual Sperm transmission of Zika: the usage of condoms is recommended.

Pregnant women should consult their family doctor before travelling to Zika-affected regions, including Brazil. Family doctors can also prescribe medication to protect against malaria.

Infectious diseases

- Vaccination against yellow fever is strongly recommended. Protection from vaccination lasts for up to 10 years, but must be given at least 10 days before traveling (where it is the primary vaccine) and must be spaced apart from other types of vaccine or booster shots.
- standard vaccinations (diphtheria, tetanus and polio) must also be up to date;

- depending on the length of stay, vaccinations against typhoid and viral hepatitis A and B, are advisable. Check with your family doctor for up-to-date advice.

Hospitals

Medical costs in Brazil are high: for example, medical treatment for a broken leg in Rio de Janeiro could cost between \$6 000 and \$7 000.

It makes sense to check whether any existing home or automotive insurance policy includes medical cover while traveling. Some banking cards or personal accident policies also include medical costs, but it is vital to check that any existing insurance covers medical expenses in Brazil.

If existing insurance does not provide enough cover, specific short-term travel insurance is available for a single trip.

Don't be a victim of crime

Rio de Janeiro has a high crime rate. Visitors should avoid wearing visibly-branded clothing in the downtown area. On the beach, keep a watchful eye on your belongings and ask neighbours to look after your things if you decide to go for a swim. Watch out for gangs of children: a common ploy is for them to pretend to be in a scuffle, but then break apart and snatch valuables from onlookers.

Rio de Janeiro, the carnival capital of the world, is surrounded by slums (*favelas*). If you decide to visit them, you should only do so with an official guide.

Beware of the sun

Travellers from the northern hemisphere who are not used to the strength of the sun in Brazil may not realise until too late how harmful it can be. Over-exposure to the sun can cause fever and nausea, as well as long-term damage to the skin. To reduce the risk of damage:

- apply high-protection sun cream;
- wear a hat or cap;
- drink plenty of water;
- limit physical activities in the heat of the sun;
- use a fan;
- spend no more than a few minutes in the sun between 12 noon and 4pm.

Emergency numbers

- For medical emergencies dial **192** to call an ambulance.
- Call **193** for the emergency fire and rescue service.
- Contact your assistance or insurance company soon as possible after any incident, to make sure that it will cover medical and other costs.
- If you have a non-urgent medical problem, contact your assistance or insurance company straight away. They will advise you which hospital or clinic can provide the best care.

Have a great time at the Rio de Janeiro Carnival!

About Allianz Worldwide Partners

Dedicated to bringing worldwide protection and care, Allianz Worldwide Partners is the B2B2C leader in assistance and insurance solutions in the following areas of expertise: global assistance, international health & life, global automotive and travel insurance. These solutions, which are a unique combination of insurance, service and technology, are available to business partners or via direct and digital channels under three internationally renowned brands: Allianz Global Assistance, Allianz Worldwide Care and Allianz Global Automotive. This global family of over 16 000 employees is present in 75 countries, speaks 70 languages and handles 40 million cases per year*, protecting customers and employees on all continents.

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*for 2015, excluding Global Automotive

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