Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: advice for travellers against health risks.


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From 1 to 9 March, during the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro there will be at least one million participants, including many travellers from other countries.

As for other mass gathering events, health risks related to vaccine-preventable diseases and gastrointestinal diseases should be considered. According with climate conditions, also vector-borne diseases should be taken into consideration; indeed, Brazilian health authorities are urging Carnival visitors to stick to celebrations in the city of Rio de Janeiro and avoid heading out of town for sightseeing at waterfalls and forests where yellow fever has been detected.

The ECDC has given practical advice for avoiding health risks to travellers to Brazil for the Carnival. In particular, before travelling to Brazil, people should ensure the update of vaccinations, and the accordance of them with the national immunisation schedule. It is important that travellers undergo two doses of measles-containing vaccine (usually MMR), rubella, diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Vaccine against HAV, meningococci ACWY, typhoid and yellow fever (especially for travellers to yellow fever high risk areas) are advisable, too. Travellers should also be aware of the fact that in 2018 Brazil reported 174,724 confirmed cases of dengue, 90,000 probable cases of Chikungunya (half of them in Rio de Janeiro) and 8,000 probable cases of Zika virus disease (over 2000 in Rio de Janeiro).

The ECDC recommends also to follow good hygiene practices and preventive measures against mosquito bites during the events. Safe sex practices and use of condoms should be promoted, and travellers should consult their physicians regarding vaccination against HBV.

Upon their return home, travellers should report their stay in Brazil to their physicians including hospitalization in Brazil during the event, especially in case of admission in hospital at home.

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