

# JOINT PUBLIC HEALTH ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS ATTENDING THE 2024 SUMMER OLYMPIC and PARALYMPIC GAMES

The 2024 Summer Olympic Games will take place in France from 26 July to 11 August 2024 and will be followed by the Paralympic Games from 28 August to 8 September. If you are travelling to attend, follow this health advice to protect your health and well-being.\*

*Before attending the event*

## Vaccination



Check your vaccination status and consult your doctor on whether you or your children are due for any vaccinations in line with your country's national immunization schedule as early as possible before you travel. Depending on factors, such as your age, the place you live, any underlying health conditions and previous vaccination status, these may include vaccinations against measles, whooping cough (pertussis), tetanus, diphtheria, polio, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) or other diseases. Check and follow your country's immunization schedule.

Cases of measles are on the rise worldwide, including in Europe and in France. Anyone is at risk of measles if they have not been fully vaccinated or have not had measles in the past. If you plan to attend the Olympic Games, be sure you are protected and protect others: check your and your family's measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccination status as soon as possible and, if unprotected, consult with your health-care provider to initiate vaccination at least 2 weeks before travelling.

More information on recommended vaccines in France: [here](#).  
WHO information and recommendations on COVID-19 vaccination: [here](#).  
ECDC information and recommendation on vaccines and vaccines schedule in European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) countries: [here](#).

## Respiratory pathogens

Respiratory infections are quite common and can sometimes be severe, particularly for people in at-risk groups, such as elderly people, people with chronic diseases, and pregnant women.

Attending a mass gathering event increases your chances of being exposed to respiratory diseases, including whooping cough and COVID-19. If you have symptoms, such as a cough, fever or sore throat, stay at home or in your hotel if possible and consider wearing a mask when you leave your hotel or home.

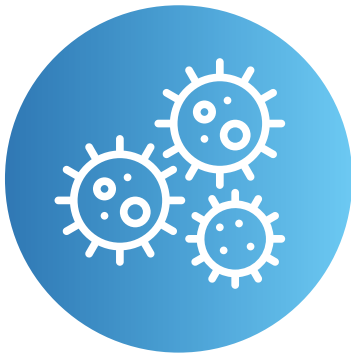
Measures to protect yourself and others include vaccination (according to your country's national immunization schedule). Consult your doctor to understand your risk and find out if you are eligible for vaccinations against COVID-19 and/or other respiratory diseases.

In addition to vaccination, there are other protective measures that people may take to reduce their risk of infection from respiratory pathogens:

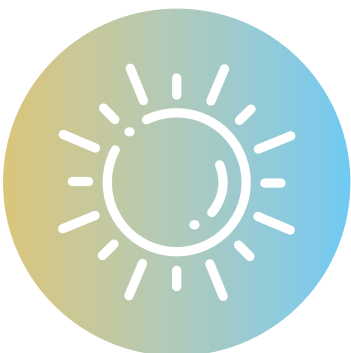
- avoid close contact with sick people;
- wash or clean your hands frequently; and
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, there are also recommended measures to avoid infecting others:

- maintain good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette;
- wash or clean your hands frequently;
- clean frequently touched surfaces and objects;
- increase ventilation (e.g. by opening windows);
- stay home from work or school and limit contact with others; and
- wear a face mask or respirator in crowded settings where physical distancing is not possible (e.g. public transport, Olympic Games venues, concerts and festivals) to protect vulnerable persons around you and help limit transmission.



## Heatwaves and sun exposure



High temperatures can be expected in summer in France, which can pose serious health risks. Extreme heat can cause heat stress and also exacerbate chronic conditions and place an additional burden on pregnant women, the elderly and the very young. Without proper precautions, heat stress can develop into heat stroke, which can be fatal if untreated. Sun exposure can also lead to illnesses related to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. However, the adverse health effects of hot and sunny weather are largely preventable through good public health practices.

To protect yourself from sun and heat, follow these recommendations.

- **Keep out of the heat when possible.** Spend as much time as possible or at least 2–3 hours of the day in a cool place and during the hottest time of day. Do not leave children or animals in parked vehicles.
- **Stay hydrated.** Remember to drink enough and often, even before feeling thirsty. Heavy sweating causes our body to lose a lot of water. Therefore, you should drink around 2 to 3 litres of fluid, such as water or chilled teas without added sugar, throughout the day during a heatwave. Avoid alcohol and limit caffeine and sugar, as these can dehydrate you and strain your circulation. The good news is that you can bring your own (plastic) water bottle (up to 75 cl) to the Olympic Games venues.
- **Keep your body cool.** Carry a fan with you and moisten/wet your body as often as possible. This will reduce the risk of getting a heatstroke.
- **Avoid direct sun exposure.** Stay in the shade and always apply sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) 30 or higher, even if you plan to stay in the shade. Wear long, airy, light-coloured clothing and a hat for additional protection. Don't forget sunglasses to shield your eyes.
- **Stay cool and take these precautions seriously** to avoid heat-related health issues. While taking care of yourself, remember to check on your family and friends who are with you.

## Food and water safety



Tap water in France is safe to drink; there is no need to buy bottled water.

During summer, hot and humid weather improves the conditions for germs to multiply quickly and make food unsafe. Contaminated foods may not appear, taste, or smell different from safe ones. Some foodborne illnesses are mild and resolve within days, but others can be severe or even fatal.

To prevent illness transmitted through food:

- eat food that is thoroughly cooked, and always wash fruit and vegetables or peel them before consumption.
- avoid consuming cooked or perishable food that has been kept at room temperature for more than 2 hours (even more so if there's a heatwave); and
- wash your hands frequently, especially before touching food and after going to the toilet. Using soap and water is best, but carrying a hand sanitizer in your bag is a good option, too, if you're often on the go.

# Diseases transmitted by insects

## Mosquito-borne diseases

Diseases transmitted by mosquitoes include dengue, chikungunya, Zika, West Nile virus infection and others. The circulation of these diseases is increasing, partly due to globalization, international travel and climate change.



Tiger mosquitoes, which can transmit several diseases, are widely present in France and are mainly active during the day. You can lower the risk of getting mosquito-borne diseases during your stay in France by protecting yourself from mosquito bites through the following.

- Wear light, breathable clothing that covers most of the body (e.g. long sleeves and pants).
- Use mosquito repellents (follow the instructions of the manufacturer). Insect repellent should be applied on a child by an adult. Apply sunscreen and insect repellent at different intervals. Sunscreen should be applied first, followed by the insect repellent.
- Sleep in an air-conditioned room or use fans when sleeping and mosquito nets for baby carriers.

If you experience high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pains, nausea, vomiting, swollen glands, or a rash at any time during or after attending the Games, seek medical care and mention your travel history.

## Tick-borne diseases

Ticks can transmit diseases that may result in severe chronic conditions or even death, such as borreliosis (Lyme disease) or tick-borne encephalitis (TBE). While you're outdoors, remember that ticks are most active from April to September. Ticks aren't just in forests; they can also be in city parks, gardens, and backyards – anywhere you might be enjoying the Games or surrounding festivities. If you have any local or general symptoms within a month of a tick bite, consult your doctor.



If you are in a bushy area, have been staying in a park, or plan to hike in wooded areas, you can reduce the risk of being bitten by ticks through the following.

- Use approved insect repellents on the skin following instructions. Insect repellent should be applied on a child by an adult.
- Wear light and breathable clothes, such as long sleeves and long trousers, that protect most body parts.
- Tuck pant legs into socks so that ticks cannot crawl up inside your pants.
- Wear light-coloured clothes to help you find ticks easily on clothes.

Check clothes and skin regularly for ticks, especially after outdoor activities, including the scalp, armpits, and inguinal area (i.e. around the groin).

# Use of alcohol and tobacco

## Alcohol



In France, it is prohibited to sell or offer alcoholic drinks to minors aged under 18 years. Public intoxication (e.g. in the street or a park) is prohibited. It is also prohibited to drive with a blood alcohol level equal to or greater than 0.5 grams per litre of blood. For drivers under 21, the limit is 0.2 grams per litre of blood. Police enforcement is both covert and overt and zero tolerance applies to drivers detected under the influence of alcohol. Penalties for offences are high. If you are visiting from another EU country, penalties are forwarded to national police authorities in your home country.

Alcohol consumption poses serious health risks, such as an increased risk of cancers and various cardiovascular diseases, and it is one of the leading risk factors for injuries. Alcohol impacts the brain and can affect thinking, mood, or behaviour. It can generate disturbances in perception and attention: judgment, coordination and speech become impaired.

Accidental poisonings can occur when large amounts of alcohol are consumed. In hot weather, consuming alcohol can lead to increased circulation problems, loss of consciousness, and even a life-threatening drop in blood pressure.

If you choose to consume alcohol, limit your intake. While small quantities of alcohol can have a stimulating effect, overall it slows down brain activity. At higher doses, it can lead to disturbances in perception and attention. For your health and safety, less alcohol is better, and none is best.

## Tobacco



In France, smoking and vaping are banned in most indoor public spaces, such as local public transport, airports, and restaurants, except in designated smoking areas at train stations, airports, and some restaurants.

Smoking in a place for collective use outside a designated area shall be punishable by a fine of up to €450.

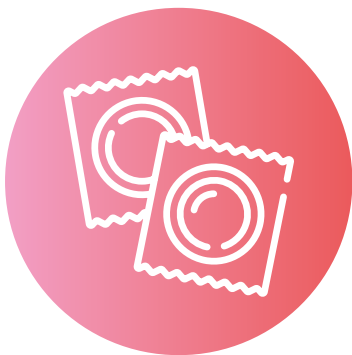
Tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke pose serious health risks, including respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases and increased cancer risk. Quitting smoking is the single best way to protect your health and the health of those around you.

# Infections transmitted through sex

It's important to protect yourself from infections transmitted while having sex. Common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Europe include chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis. Other infections, such as HIV, viral hepatitis and mpox, can also be transmitted during sex. Untreated STIs and mpox can lead to serious health issues, while HIV infection requires lifelong treatment.

Condoms, when used correctly and consistently, are effective at decreasing the risk of STIs and HIV transmission. In France, condoms are available in drugstores, pharmacies and supermarkets. Condoms are available for free in some CEGIDD (STI screening centres). Using a condom won't fully protect you from mpox, but it may reduce your risk or extent of exposure.

Consult your health-care provider in your home country to discuss necessary vaccinations or precautions based on your sexual health risk assessment. They may recommend pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV but note that PrEP does not protect against other STIs. Effective vaccines exist for hepatitis A, hepatitis B and mpox.



If you have had unprotected sex (without a condom) or sex with multiple partners, it is important to get tested for STIs, especially if you have symptoms. Even if you do not have any symptoms, getting tested is still advised, as you might have gotten the infection and could pass it on to your sexual partners.

For potential HIV or mpox exposure, contact outpatient departments or HIV and STI specialist practices for post-exposure prophylaxis. More information is available [here](#).

STIs might have no symptoms; however, common signs include unusual discharge from the genitals or rectum, itching, pain during urination, rectal pain, skin changes (including rashes or blister-like lesions), yellowing of the skin, pain during sex, or influenza-like symptoms. If you notice any signs of an STI or mpox, see a health-care provider, sexual health clinic, or community organization promptly. Early detection makes treatment easier and prevents transmission to others.

## How to access STI testing and treatment in France, if needed

If you suspect that you have become infected or if you notice signs of an STI, you should seek medical advice and, if necessary, get tested. You can find a map of STI testing centers [here](#).

# Access to the health system in France



## What do I do if I need emergency medical assistance?

If you need medical assistance in case of emergency, you can check the medical facilities available nearby [here](#).

It is discouraged to seek urgent care if you do not require immediate care, as you might experience long wait times.

You can call **112** or **15** for all your medical needs, whether urgent or not.

Do you wish to make a short stay in France as an insured national of an EU/EEA country or Switzerland? You must hold a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This allows you to benefit from the care of your health insurance in France and to access the French health system more easily. To obtain this card, and before leaving for France, you must apply to your health insurance organization.

More information is available [here](#).



## How and where do I get medication?

Most medicines are available in the pharmacy. If you are travelling to France, do not forget to bring the medications you are taking for your chronic diseases with you. You can still get your medications in a pharmacy in France if you have a prescription and, there, you can be directed suitably.

## Access to medical care for persons with disabilities

The accessibility directory provides precise information on the level of accessibility for persons with disabilities at medical and paramedical facilities in France. It provides rapid and geolocalized information on the care offered for people with disabilities or with specific needs, such as those linked to loss of autonomy or a language barrier.

More information is available [here](#).

