



## Vanuatu

The following information must be viewed as a guide only. It is not intended, nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice.

Specific recommendations on vaccinations, antimalarial medications & targeted travel health advice is always provided on an individual basis taking into account:

- the personal health of the traveller including past medical & vaccination history;
- intended activities;
- precise itinerary;
- style of travel;
- type of accommodation;
- time of year;
- altitude; &
- length of stay.

As well, some vaccines eg rabies & tuberculosis are very much influenced by local disease risk. Specific face-to-face advice is particularly important when recommending antimalarial medications & those for presumptive treatment eg for travellers diarrhoea.

We strongly recommend travellers seek an appointment with a doctor trained in travel health prior to departure.

Medical & nursing staff at The Travel Doctor-TMVC are trained in international public health issues with a focus on immunisations & preventive medicine. Many have travelled extensively & a number have worked in less developed areas of the world for extended periods. Travellers should undergo individual risk assessments whether they are short term holiday makers, business people or the long term expatriate worker. The Travel Doctor-TMVC has clinics Australia wide. In Australia the local centre may be contacted on 1300 658 844, or by visiting [www.traveldoctor.com.au](http://www.traveldoctor.com.au). It is recommended that you visit a travel health professional 6-8 weeks prior to departure. However, if that time frame is not possible, remember – “It’s never too late to vaccinate”.

### Healthy Travelling in Vanuatu

Vanuatu is perennially popular with Australian travellers, being both a cruise & direct flight holiday spot. The major resorts are in the capital Port Vila, although adventurous travellers frequent the picturesque outer islands.

Pre-travel preparation will help protect your health while you are away. To assist you in recognising & understanding some of the major travel health risks you may face while holidaying in Vanuatu, The Travel Doctor-TMVC has prepared a summary of some of these issues in the following pages.

**Table 1** provides a brief description of some of the major travel health issues & vaccinations that should be considered for travel to Vanuatu.

**Table 2** provides a summary of these major travel health issues & preventative measures that should be considered.

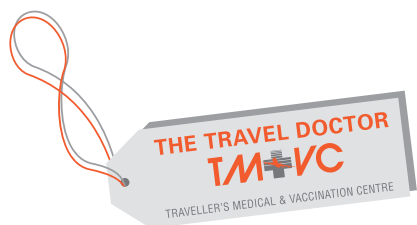
We hope you find this information useful in preparing for your trip. Remember it is advisable to consult a travel health specialist prior to departure.

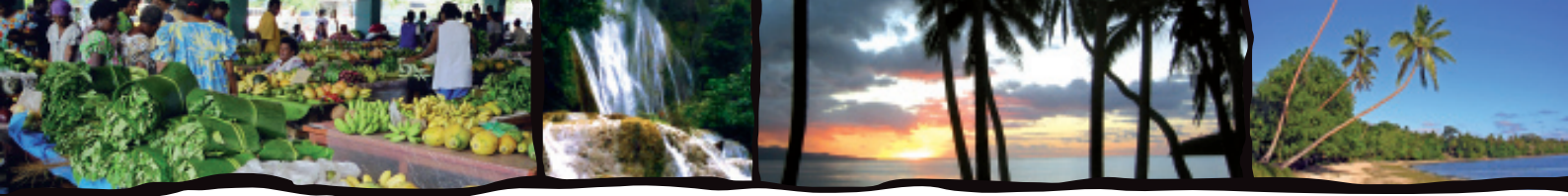
Currency of your basic immunisations such as Tetanus & Diphtheria should be checked & others like Hepatitis A & Typhoid considered according to the criteria mentioned previously.



**Table 1. Major Travel Health Issues & Considerations for Vanuatu**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Hepatitis A                     | This is a viral disease of the liver which is transmitted through eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water. It is the most common vaccine preventable disease that occurs in travellers to less developed areas of the world. It is strongly recommended for travel to Vanuatu.  |
| Hepatitis B                     | This is a viral disease of the liver that is transmitted via blood, blood products or bodily fluids. It is vaccine preventable. Hepatitis B immunisation is now part of the childhood immunisation schedule. Many adult travellers have missed this very important immunisation & travel may be a good reason for vaccination. The vaccine is currently provided to all children as part of our childhood immunisation program.   |
| Typhoid                         | Typhoid Fever is caused by a bacteria found in contaminated food & water. It is endemic in the South Pacific & vaccination is recommended for travellers to areas where environmental sanitation & personal hygiene may be poor. The adventurous eater venturing 'off the beaten' path should certainly consider vaccination. Cruise based tourists are at lower risk.  |
| Tetanus, Pertussis & Diphtheria | Tetanus is caused by a toxin released by a common dust or soil bacteria, which enters the body through a wound. Diphtheria is a bacterial infection of the throat & occasionally of the skin. It is found world wide & is transmitted from person-to-person by coughing & sneezing. Pertussis (Whooping cough) is a highly infectious respiratory infection responsible for 300,000 deaths annually, mainly in children. Diphtheria & pertussis vaccines can be added to the tetanus vaccine. Because many adults no longer have immunity from childhood immunisation it is advised that travellers to less developed countries have a tetanus, diphtheria & pertussis booster. |
| Measles, Mumps & Rubella        | Childhood immunisation coverage in many developing countries is not good. As such, travellers under the age of 40 years should have their measles, mumps & rubella immunisation complete. Those over the age of 40 years are most likely to have long term immunity from previous exposure as a child.  |
| Chickenpox                      | This very common infectious disease can now be prevented through immunisation. Many people miss the disease in childhood only to have a significant illness as an adult. Travel puts one at higher exposure & if one cannot elicit a history of having had the illness a test can show whether at risk.   |
| Influenza                       | Individuals intending to travel out of an Australian winter might consider the current flu vaccine at the beginning of the season. Exposure to illness in airports & commuter transport is common & exposure may ruin a much needed break. In fact, influenza is likely to be the commonest vaccine preventable disease faced by travellers.  |
| Malaria                         | Malaria is transmitted by a night biting mosquito. There is a high risk of contracting malaria in the outer islands, especially to the North. Futuna Island is malaria free. The risk of exposure at Port Villa in resort areas or for a few days at Tannah is low. While the risk is low it is not NIL & discussing your particular trip with a travel medicine specialist is important. Medications to reduce the risk of disease may be recommended & any illness which is flu-like in nature after returning should still be checked for malaria. Cruise ship visitors who sleep on board are at negligible risk.   |
| Dengue fever                    | Dengue (pronounced den-gee) Fever is a viral disease with flu like symptoms that is transmitted by mosquitos. There is no vaccine for dengue fever and prevention is based upon insect avoidance via repellents, nets and insecticides. The mosquito is a day time biter and the risk is greatest in urban areas.   |
| Traveller's Diarrhoea           | Up to 40% of tourists may develop 3 or more loose bowel motions a day within the first week of travel. A variety of germs can be responsible for this infection & a Traveller's Medical Kit containing appropriate therapy can rapidly improve the symptoms. It is also important to follow the rules of healthy eating & drinking to minimise risks.   |



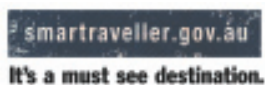


**Table 2. Summary of travel health issues for Vanuatu & preventative options available**

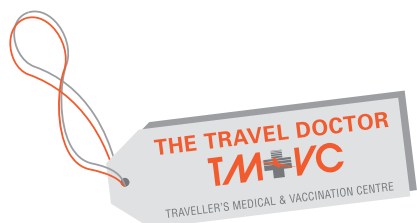
|                                 | Vaccine Available | Healthy Eating & Drinking | Insect Avoidance | Animal Avoidance |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Hepatitis A                     | ✓                 | ✓                         |                  |                  |
| Hepatitis B                     | ✓                 |                           |                  |                  |
| Typhoid                         | ✓                 | ✓                         |                  |                  |
| Tetanus, Pertussis & Diphtheria | ✓                 |                           |                  |                  |
| Measles, Mumps & Rubella        | ✓                 |                           |                  |                  |
| Chickenpox                      | ✓                 |                           |                  |                  |
| Influenza                       | ✓                 |                           |                  |                  |
| Malaria                         |                   |                           | ✓                |                  |
| Traveller's Diarrhoea           |                   | ✓                         |                  |                  |

✓ indicates preventative considerations

**Malaria** is a risk factor in Vanuatu except on Futuna Island. Malaria prevention options should be discussed with a travel medicine specialist prior to departure.



Remember to check the DFAT 'Smartraveller' website [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) prior to departure



...for a safe and healthy journey

Travel Health Fact Sheet **Vanuatu**

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