



Syria and Turkey – Recommendations | Checklist for Humanitarian Missions to Regions affected by the Earthquake

Following the major earthquakes on 6 February 2023 and numerous severe aftershocks, as of 28 February 2023, the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) reported 44 218 deaths and 108 068 injuries in Turkey, and over 5 914 deaths and 10 857 injuries in north-west Syria. For updates, please news at www.healthytravel.ch.

Recommendations for persons in humanitarian mission:

The following vaccinations and precautions should be considered with regard to a humanitarian mission in affected regions by the earthquake in Syria and / or Turkey. It should be noted that risks may differ depending on the type of placement and mission. Predicted major risks are foodborne and waterborne diseases, skin infections and respiratory infections. Prescription of a standby-antibiotic treatment (e.g. Azithromycin, Co-amoxicillin) is recommended.

Please note: These recommendations differ in part from official guidelines. ECTM applies the below-mentioned adaptations only to humanitarian aid operations, as the risk is different from that for travelers and a quick and pragmatic approach is needed.

A. Vaccinations:

- Diphtheria / Tetanus (DiTe):** Basic immunization according to [FOPH](#). Booster dose **10 years** after the last DiTe dose because protection against diphtheria wanes.
- Polio**: In addition to the basic immunisation against polio, a booster vaccination is recommended every 10 years.
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella: (MMR):** All persons born after 1963 who do not have documented protection against infection (antibodies or 2 documented vaccinations) should be vaccinated twice with MMR vaccine.
- Varicella:** Persons between 13 months and 39 years of age who have not had chickenpox and who have not received 2 doses of chickenpox vaccine should receive a vaccination (2 doses with minimum interval of 4 weeks), according to [FOPH](#).
- COVID-19:** all persons.
- Influenza:** all persons.
- Hepatitis A:** for all persons regardless of the timeframe. 1st dose with Havrix 1400 is sufficient, 2nd dose after 12 months. **Remark:** One dose of Twinrix® dose is **not** sufficient as it contains only 720 IE of hepatitis A antigen.
- Hepatitis B:** rapid scheme: day 0, 7, 21. Booster dose after 12 months.
- Rabies:** for all persons 2-doses- rapid scheme (=primary vaccination): 1st dose: day 0. 2nd dose: minimal interval of 7 days after 1st dose. Booster doses: after 12months following primary vaccination. Then, every 3-5 years if serology cannot be done before departure (adaptation by ECTM for humanitarian workers). For immunocompromised persons, see vaccination schedule: [FOPH](#)
- CAVE:** in case of exposure, postexposure-prophylaxis (PEP) is always needed! For details, see [rabies flyer](#).
- Typhoid fever:** for all persons regardless of the time to departure, ([LINK](#)).
- Cholera:** vaccination recommended for missions in Syria. For Turkey, vaccination can be considered according to the epidemiological evolution. In addition, strict hygiene is very important to prevent cholera and other gastrointestinal infections.
- Yellow fever:** [Syria - entry requirement](#): Vaccination required if arriving within 6 days after leaving or transiting countries with risk of yellow fever transmission. Exempt: Passengers transiting countries with risk of yellow fever transmission if not leaving the transit areas.

B. Vector- borne disease: From April to November: optimal mosquito bite prevention, see [factsheet](#)!

- West-Nile Fever [vector : mosquitoes]
- Leishmaniosis [vector : sand flies]

C. Other important health risks (see also www.healthytravel.ch), information should be given in particular on:

- Diarrhea (strict hand hygiene, food and drinking water hygiene!, prescription of stand-by antibiotics is recommended, e.g. Azithromycin)
- Skin infections (thorough disinfection!, prescription of stand-by antibiotics is recommended, e.g. Co-Amoxicillin)
- Leptospirosis
- Other: see also country page 'Syria' and 'Turkey' at www.healthytravel.ch