Czech Republic

Risk Ratings

LOW MEDICAL RISK for Czech Republic

Risk Summary

COVID-19 is a pandemic. All areas are likely to experience an outbreak and disruption.

International SOS is monitoring the situation closely.

Please see our:

Medical and Security Alerts for Czech Republic
COVID-19 information for Czech Republic
Dedicated COVID-19 website

Petty crime, such as pickpocketing, poses the main risk for business travellers, particularly around train stations, metro stations and popular tourist areas. Car theft also remains a notable problem in the capital Prague. Far-right groups, whose members mostly target the local Roma community, remain active in the country. Such activity does not pose a direct threat to foreign nationals, but business travellers belonging to a visible ethnic or religious minority group should exercise caution.

This information is intended as a summary of the travel security environment. However, the risks can change at short notice during a crisis or evolving situation. Please check our travel security alerts to ensure you are informed of the most recent developments.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

Alerts

COVID-19: Persistent restrictions in response to ongoing pandemic underline continued need for flexibility

Vaccinations For Czech Republic

*COVID-19  Vaccination is recommended for all travellers.

Hepatitis A  Recommended for all travellers and expatriates,

Hepatitis B  Recommended for most travellers and expatriates,

Tickborne encephalitis  May be recommended for those visiting forests,

Routine Vaccinations

- All routine vaccinations should be current: these include Measles-Mumps-Rubella, Polio, Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis, and Varicella.
- Annual influenza vaccination.

Other Medical Precautions

- Before you go - See your doctor and dentist and ensure you are in the best health before you leave. Other preparations:
- Malaria

https://www.internationalsos.com/MasterPortal/PrintDisplay.aspx
Alerts

- Suspected meningitis outbreak
- Yellow fever
- Cases of yellow fever

View All Alerts

Before You Go

See your doctor and dentist and ensure you are in the best health before you leave. Other preparations:

- **Check your routine vaccinations**
  
  Check your **measles** and other routine vaccinations are up to date (polio; varicella; mumps and rubella; tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, seasonal influenza). See a travel health practitioner 6 to 8 weeks before departure for destination-specific health preparations. You may need additional vaccinations, some of which require several doses, or be recommended malaria medication which may need to be started a week or more before arriving in the malarial country. If you are eligible, get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it's available to you.

- **Documentation:** Arrange a copy of your personal health record to carry with you when you travel. Include a letter from your doctor explaining your need for all medications you are carrying, including any over-the-counter medications, in English and the language of your destination(s). Make sure you have copies of your prescriptions.

- **Medication:** Check the regulations of your destination country regarding importation of your medication, as some drugs may be strictly prohibited (especially narcotics and psychotropics) and may result in severe penalties. Some restrictions are published on the [International Narcotics Control Board](https://www.internationalsos.com/MasterPortal/PrintDisplay.aspx). Take any medicines you require in their original packaging, including any information leaflets, with them clearly labelled with your name (matching your passport name), and your doctor's name. Have enough to cover the trip, and extra in case of delays, however note that many destinations limit quantities of certain drugs to a 30-day supply. Carry medication in your hand luggage, with copies of your prescriptions.

Vaccinations for Czech Republic

Recommendations may vary for short-term visitors. Always consult your travel health advisor or contact International SOS to discuss your specific needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccination</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*COVID-19</td>
<td>Vaccination is recommended for all travellers. For full details of testing and quarantine requirements, see the Restrictions section of the COVID-19 Impact on the Location Guides.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td>Recommended for all travellers and expatriates, especially groups at higher risk including:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- long-term and frequent visitors.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations or stay in areas with poor sanitation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men see (see <a href="https://www.cdc.gov">US CDC</a>).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- people who use illicit drugs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- those with liver disease.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>Recommended for most travellers and expatriates, especially:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- For long-term or frequent visitors, and health-care workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- For adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- If possibility of new sexual partner, needle sharing, acupuncture, dental work, body piercing or tattooing during visit.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travelers, regardless of destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tickborne encephalitis</td>
<td>May be recommended for those visiting forests, fields or pastures during the summer tick season or who drink unpasteurized milk.</td>
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**Malaria**

There is no malaria in Czech Republic.

**Zika Virus**
There is no Zika Virus in Czech Republic.

Standard of Care

Emergency Response

Always try to call International SOS whenever medical care or advice is required, especially in emergencies.

Use the public ambulance service for medical emergencies. For emergencies call 112 for an English or German-speaking dispatcher, or 155 for one who speaks Czech. Ambulances are staffed with certified trained physicians and nurses. They respond within 15 minutes to emergencies in urban as well as rural areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>155 or 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>150 or 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>158 or 112</td>
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Standard of Health Care

Doctors in the Czech Republic are professional, well trained and offer high-quality medical care. A wide range of medical services are available, especially in Prague and major cities. Although most of public facilities in large cities provide a high level of care, other elements of treatment (attitude of the staff, level of hospital accommodation) may not be as high as in medical facilities in Western Europe.

Travellers and expatriates sometimes prefer to get non-emergency, outpatient care at private facilities due to non-medical amenities. For example, doctors often speak English or rooms may offer more privacy. (These centers charge additional fees for extra services rendered, which may not be covered by your insurance.) Consultant physicians in private facilities are often chiefs/deputy heads of public clinics.

However, inpatient care at private facilities is limited. Comprehensive and complex care cannot be provided, as these facilities might lack things like CT scan and MRI capability, stroke units, intensive care units, intensive radiology, etc. Any moderate to serious medical condition should be referred to public sector, not handled in private facilities.

Although some of the government-run hospitals and clinics are quite run-down, most of them - especially in larger cities - have been reconstructed recently. They can provide reasonable emergency care. State-run medical facilities charge lower, all-inclusive fees and treat all patients uniformly.

OutPatient Care

In major cities (e.g. Prague, Brno) good quality outpatient care is available. Some professionals make house calls. After hours or urgent specialty consultation can be obtained at hospital emergency departments.

Paying for Health Care

Providers will expect cash payments or guarantees from international assistance and insurance companies at the time services are rendered. Some facilities will also accept credit card payments. This may vary considerably.

Citizens of the EU and certain other countries where a reciprocal health agreement is in place are entitled to emergency public medical treatment, as per the old E111 form. As of January 2006, the form has been replaced with a European Health Insurance card, or EHIC. A valid card must be presented to take advantage of the agreement. Service under the EHIC may involve expenses that are typically provided free of charge in your home country.

Do not defer medical treatment because of financial concerns. Contact International SOS, and if our terms allow, we will make financial arrangements on your behalf.

Dental Care

High quality dental care can be found in most cities. All dentists are registered with the Czech Dental Chamber.

Blood Supplies

The blood supply in the Czech Republic is considered safe. It is screened for transfusion-transmissible infectious agents according to international standards.

Even in areas where the blood supply is considered safe, it's best to avoid blood transfusions if possible. Screening cannot detect every blood-borne disease, and immune reactions can vary from minor to life-threatening. If a blood transfusion is recommended and circumstances permit, seek a second opinion from International SOS or your health advisor.

Medication Availability

A wide range of antibiotics and prescription medications is available. Pharmacies with a 24-hour emergency service are located in major cities. Travellers should consider bringing any non-prescription drugs they might need, as instructions on the packets may not be in English. Many foreign-based pharmaceutical companies operate branches in the Czech Republic.
Since brand names vary, know the generic (chemical) names of your medications. It is always advisable to bring an adequate supply of prescription and other medications from your home country. However ensure you check the regulations of your destination regarding importation of your medication, as some drugs may be strictly prohibited (especially narcotics and psychotropics) and may result in severe penalties. Some restrictions are published on the International Narcotics Control Board.

Clinics & Hospitals

Medical Providers
No matter where you are, contact International SOS first if you are sick, injured or need medical advice.

Our medical staff will advise you, help you select the correct doctor, hospital or clinic, and make any necessary appointments on your behalf. If our terms allow, we will also make financial arrangements for you.

It is recommended that you contact International SOS before accessing medical care in Czech Republic

Hospitals / Clinics
If you are unable to contact International SOS, the following list of hospitals and clinics is provided in case of medical emergencies.

Prague
Central Military Hospital Stresovice
Category: Hospital
Address: U Vojenske nemocnice 1200
Prague, Prague 169 02
Telephone: 420 (0)973208333

Hospital Na Homolce
Category: Hospital
Address: Roentgenova 2
Prague, Prague 150 30
Telephone: 420 257 27 1111 (Switchboard 24/7)
420 257 27 2144 / 2142 (Mon-Fri 7:00-16:30)

Motol University Hospital
Category: Hospital
Address: V ?valu 84
Prague, Prague 5 150 00
Telephone: 420 224 433 674 (ADULT)
420 224 433 681 (ADULT)
420 224 433 682 (ADULT)
420 224 433 690 (PED)
420 224 433 691 (PED)

Food & Water

Food and Water Precautions
Travellers have a small risk of developing diarrhoea in any country. It may be advisable to drink bottled water only, especially on short trips. Always wash your hands with soap before eating, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. See the following country-specific recommendations:

Water and Beverages
In general, tap water in cities (including Prague) is considered safe to drink.

Food Risk
Local meat, poultry, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat. Food served in large hotels, resorts and popular restaurants is considered safe. Avoid food sold by street vendors, as the standard of hygiene may be low, and the food may not be fresh.

More on food and water safety

Health Threats Summary

Health threats present include:

Animals: Hantaviruses, Rabies

Bites and Stings: Ehrlichiosis, Lyme disease, Tickborne encephalitis, West Nile Virus
Coughing/sneezing: *COVID-19

Food and/or water: Hepatitis A, Travellers' diarrhoea

Sex/blood/needles: HIV, Hepatitis B and C, & STIs

Health Threats

▲ COVID-19 | Threat from: Coughing/sneezing

COVID-19 | Threat from coughing/sneezing
International SOS is monitoring closely - please see the ALERTS on the "View All Alerts" section of this location guide, and the COVID-19 pages of the Pandemic Information website.

Transmission is from person to person through contact with particles expelled into the air by an infected person when talking, coughing or sneezing. Other people can inhale these particles and become infected. They may also become infected by touching their eyes, nose or mouth after touching contaminated surfaces.

Most people will develop mild to moderate illness only which lasts up to two weeks. Symptoms vary greatly but the main symptoms are a high fever, a cough and loss or change in sense of smell or taste. Other common symptoms include fatigue, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath and breathing difficulty. Some people may continue to have symptoms that last for weeks or months after the initial infection has gone. Older people and people with underlying health conditions are at higher risk for severe disease and death.

Prevention
Vaccine: Get vaccinated as soon as you are eligible to do so.

Avoid potential exposure to infection: crowds, indoor public places, people who are obviously unwell or coughing and sneezing.

Take measures to protect yourself from infection: trying to stay 2 metres away from other people and wear a mask in public places, ensure adequate ventilation in enclosed spaces. Wash hands frequently, especially before eating, preparing food or touching your face, after using the restroom and when leaving a public place.

Czech Republic

The nation's first imported cases were reported on 2 March 2020, and local transmission was confirmed a few days later.

For more information, see the Czech Republic COVID-19 dashboard and the Czech Republic Ministry of Health COVID-19 website.

▲ Ehrlichiosis | Threat from: Bites and Stings

Ehrlichiosis is found in the Americas and Europe. It is transmitted to humans usually through the bite of an infected lone star tick, which feeds on animals, both domestic and wild. Humans typically come into contact with ticks during outdoor activities. The tick bites are often painless and go unnoticed. The disease may sometimes be transmitted via ticks from infected pet dogs.

Symptoms of ehrlichiosis are usually mild but the infection may turn into a severe fatal illness unless treated promptly. No vaccine is available for this disease. Prevent infection by avoiding tick bites. For tick removal, please click here.

Czech Republic

Fewer than 10 cases per year of Ehrlichiosis have been reported.

▲ Hantaviruses | Threat from: Animals

Hantaviruses are a group of viruses that belong to the bunyaviridae family. They can cause two different types of illness in humans: Haemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS) involves the kidneys while Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) involves the respiratory system. Regardless of which illness they cause, hantaviruses are carried by infected rodents. Virus is present in the animal's saliva, urine and faeces. Droplets of these excretions can contaminate the air in a process called aerosolisation. Humans become sick when they inhale the virus.

The incubation period of HPS is not positively known. Limited data suggests that people become sick within one to eight weeks after being exposed to the virus. The incubation period for HFRS is usually 1 to 2 weeks after exposure but could be as long as 8 weeks.

Initial symptoms of HPS include fatigue, fever, and muscle aches. About 50 percent of HPS patients also experience headache, dizziness, and abdominal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, pain). The "late stage" symptoms of HPS are cough/shortness of breath and a feeling of overall tightness in the chest. Heartbeat and breathing may both become rapid at this stage of illness. Symptoms of HFRS appear suddenly and include intense headaches, back and abdominal pain, fever, chills, nausea and blurred vision. As the disease progresses, patients may develop flushing of the face, inflammation, redness of the eyes or a rash. Later symptoms include bleeding from the skin, conjunctiva of the eye, and mouth. In the most severe cases renal failure develops.

There is no specific treatment or cure. Patients are treated supportively, meaning their symptoms are addressed even though the disease itself cannot be cured. Patients usually require hospitalisation in an intensive care unit. An antiviral medication, ribavirin, may be used to treat the HFRS although its effectiveness has not been proven in HPS.
There is no vaccine for HPS. Vaccines against HFRS are being used in many Asian countries. The best way to avoid infection is to eliminate rodents from your living space and worksite, and/or avoid contact with them. Keep food in tightly sealed containers, clean dishes immediately after use, do not leave pet food out all day, and seal holes to the outside – generally, make your environment inhospitable to rodents.

Czech Republic
Cases of hantavirus occur periodically.

Hepatitis A | Threat from: Food and/or water
Hepatitis A is a viral disease that causes liver inflammation. The virus is present in the faeces of an infected person. It spreads through contaminated food and water and is common in areas with poor sanitation. Person-to-person spread also occurs, when the virus is inadvertently transferred into the mouth, including during sexual activity. People at higher risk of infection include men who have sex with men, illicit drug users and people with liver disease.

Not everyone gets symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they begin two to four weeks or more after infection and can last for weeks or months. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain/discomfort, jaundice (yellow colour of the skin and eyes), dark urine, clay-coloured stool, joint pain and itching. Many infected people suffer only a mild illness. Most cases recover fully after four or more weeks. However, for some, the disease can be severe, and occasionally is fatal. There is no specific treatment and cases are managed through supportive therapy.

Prevention is through vaccination, attention to hygiene, and access to safe food and water.

HIV, Hepatitis B and C, & STIs | Threat from: Sex/blood/needles
HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C are spread by contact with bodily fluids (especially blood and semen).

- unprotected sex,
- needle sharing during IV drug use, or
- unsafe blood or medical/dental instruments.

Genital herpes (HSV), genital warts (HPV), gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and most other sexually transmitted diseases are spread by genital contact.

Prevention:
- In many countries, hepatitis B is now a routine childhood immunisation and need not be repeated. All non-immune travellers should consider vaccination.
- Always use new condoms (preferably brought from your home country).
- IV drug users should not share needles.
- Avoid having tattoos or piercings done.
- In healthcare settings, make sure that needles and syringes sterile and not shared between patients.
- Call International SOS or your corporate medical department if you are hospitalised.
- Seek medical attention within 24 hours if you accidentally come into contact with someone else's bodily fluids.

Lyme disease | Threat from: Bites and Stings
Lyme disease occurs in North America, Europe and Asia. It is transmitted to humans by the bite of a particular species of tick. Lyme disease can cause an expanding rash at the site of the bite, fever, arthritis and nerve problems such as facial palsy.

To prevent tick bites:
- Avoid tick habitats
- Use insect repellents
- Check daily for ticks

Lyme disease vaccination is no longer available.

If you develop a rash at the site of a tick bite or other symptoms of Lyme disease, seek medical attention. A course of antibiotics can cure Lyme disease.

Rabies | Threat from: Animals
Rabies is a viral disease contracted when bitten or scratched by an infected (rabid) animal, often a dog. Once it enters the body, the virus travels along nerves and causes paralysis. As it reaches important organs like the spinal cord and the brain, it causes coma and death.

In countries where rabies is present in animals or bats, ALL animal / bat bites, scratches and licks to broken skin must be treated seriously. Rabies vaccination is very effective in preventing rabies, even after a bite/scratch by a rabid animal.
Rabies vaccination
Pre-exposure vaccination is often recommended for expatriates and long-term visitors to destinations where rabies is present. It's especially recommended if quality medical care may not be available after being bitten or scratched by an animal. Pre-exposure treatment can be especially useful for children, since they may not tell their parents that they have been bitten/scratched.

Pre-exposure vaccination makes it easier to treat a bite or scratch. That's important because some types of rabies treatment can be in short supply in many countries, even in cities.

If bitten, scratched or licked (on broken skin) by an animal:

- Immediately cleanse the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.
- Seek medical advice from a qualified source or your assistance company.
- Notify local health authorities immediately. You may need post-exposure vaccination, even if you have had pre-exposure vaccination. (THIS CAN BE LIFE SAVING.)

Czech Republic
There is a small risk of rabies in land-based animals within 50 kilometres of the border with Poland and Slovakia. In the remainder of the country, rabies is generally present in bats only and the risk of exposure for average travellers is low.

Tickborne encephalitis | Threat from : Bites and Stings

The virus is mainly transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected tick. Ticks are usually found at the edge of forests and in clearings, long grass and hedges and are more common in the summer months. Often, the bite goes unnoticed. Infection can also be acquired by consuming unpasteurized dairy products from infected cows, goats or sheep.

About 14 days after the tick bite, the patient suffers fever, headache, muscle aches, nausea and fatigue. The symptoms usually resolve in a week or so, but up to one third of patients develop a second, more severe illness. Symptoms may include severe headaches, decreased mental state, convulsions, weakness and/or coma. These symptoms indicate that the virus is affecting the brain. About one percent of cases are fatal. Fortunately, only one out of 250 people who get infected with the virus actually becomes ill.

To prevent infection, it is important to prevent tick bites, especially as most travelers have not been vaccinated.

- Wear long pants with tight cuffs, and tuck pant legs into socks.
- Use insect repellent containing DEET.
- Consider soaking or spraying your clothes with the insecticide permethrin. (Do not apply permethrin directly to the skin.)
- After visiting a forest or pasture, search for ticks on your body and clothing. If a tick is found, remove it gently using tweezers.

A safe, effective vaccine is available in Canada, Europe and the UK. It is not available in the U.S. The vaccine is given routinely to populations living in infected areas of Europe and Russia. However, the CDC does not generally recommend its use for travelers. Travelers at high-risk of exposure should consult their travel health practitioners for an individual recommendation on vaccination.

Czech Republic
Several hundred cases are reported every year. Peak transmission season is from June to August.

Travellers' diarrhoea | Threat from : Food and/or water

Travellers' diarrhoea is the most common travel-related illness. It usually occurs within the first week away from home. It is spread through contaminated food and water.

Prevention is through choosing safe food and water, and paying attention to hygiene. Select food that is thoroughly cooked while fresh and served hot. Avoid undercooked or raw meat, fish or shellfish. Avoid salad and raw vegetables unless you can wash them with clean (treated) water and you peel them yourself.

Unless you are certain that the tap water is drinkable - choose bottled water and beverages, avoid ice.

Czech Republic
Travelers have a moderate risk of experiencing travelers' diarrhea when staying outside of first class hotels and tourist resorts.

West Nile Virus | Threat from : Bites and Stings

Primarily a disease of birds, West Nile virus (WNV) can infect humans. The most common route for a human infection is via mosquitoes. The mosquito feeds on an infected bird or other animal, then bites a human and introduces the virus into their body.

Most people who get WNV develop no symptoms. Of the 20 percent who do get ill, most develop mild symptoms 3-14 days after being bitten: fever, head and body ache, nausea and vomiting. Sometimes the lymph nodes swell or a rash appears on the trunk.

In fewer than one percent of all human cases, the person develops a serious, possibly fatal, infection. Symptoms may include high fever, headache, stiff neck, disorientation, muscle weakness, tremors and paralysis. The brain and membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord may get inflamed, which can cause coma and death. Patients who recover from a serious WNV infection may suffer permanent brain damage.

There is no specific treatment for the disease, or vaccine to protect against it. To avoid infection, prevent mosquito bites in areas where the virus circulates. Wear long
sleeves and long pants, and use insect repellents.

Czech Republic

The first human cases of WNV were reported in Breclav area in 1997. Sporadic cases have been reported since. The risk of transmission is typically between June and November.