Italy

Risk Ratings

LOW MEDICAL RISK for Italy

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 Italy
COVID-19 information for Italy
Dedicated COVID-19 website

Petty and opportunistic crime pose the main risk in major urban centres, particularly in tourist spots. Violent crime rates remain low. Like other Western European countries, Italy faces a credible risk of terrorist attack by Islamist extremists, though none has so far occurred. Protests against government policies and strikes occur regularly and can cause travel disruption.

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

Sicily region: Short-notice closure at Catania-Fontanarossa Airport possible due to volcanic activity; reconfirm flights

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

View All Alerts

Vaccinations For Italy

*COVID-19 Vaccination is recommended for all travellers.

Read more

Hepatitis A Many travel health professionals recommend

Read more

Hepatitis B Recommended for health care workers and anyone

Read more

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
Zika Virus
Health Threats

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. 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 Italy

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>Details</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td>Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis A vaccination for all travellers regardless of destination, especially those who are at higher risk (see US CDC), such as gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, people who use illicit drugs or those with liver disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>Recommended for health care workers and anyone who may have a new sexual partner, share needles or get a tattoo or body piercing. Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travellers and expatriates, regardless of destination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Malaria

There is no malaria in Italy.

Zika Virus

There is no Zika Virus in Italy.

Standard of Care

Emergency Response

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

Use 112 to contact emergency services in EU countries. This number supplants local numbers used in Italy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>118/112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>115/112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>113/112</td>
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Standard of Health Care

Medical facilities in the major Italian cities offer good quality medical care and are capable of handling most medical cases and medical emergencies. In general, private hospitals are recommended for routine and elective medical care, while public hospitals are better equipped to handle emergencies. Public hospitals generally have very few, if any, English speaking staff, and even in private facilities, English speakers are very limited in number. Outside the major cities, the medical infrastructure is less developed. Moderate and serious medical conditions may need to be evacuated to a larger center. In terms of the standard of medical care, Italy can be basically divided into two zones:

- Northern Italy provides medical care of international standard (from the Austrian border to Molise, south of Rome)
- Southern Italy (from Molise to Calabria) offers a much more variable standard of medical care. Nursing care is of a significantly lower standard.

Outpatient Care

Outpatient services are offered at public hospitals, private clinics and some specialized diagnostic centers throughout Italy. In most cities, the "Guardia Medica" is a public service and it offers house call and hotel visits out of office hours if the doctor on duty deems it necessary.

Paying for Health Care

Both public and private facilities expect cash payment at the time services are rendered. Most large private hospitals will also accept credit card payments. In both the public and private hospitals, ATM machines are often available in the reception areas.

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

Dental services are offered at public hospitals, private clinics and at some specialized diagnostic centers throughout Italy.

Blood Supplies

The blood supply in Italy is considered safe and has been screened 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 medications are available in Italy. There are many reputable pharmacies in major cities.

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

**Milan**
- **Istituto Clinico Humanitas**
  - **Category:** Hospital
  - **Address:** Via Manzoni 56
    - Rozzano
    - Milan, Lombardy 20089
  - **Telephone:** 39 0282241

- **Ospedale San Raffaele**
  - **Category:** Hospital
  - **Address:** Via Olgettina, 60
    - Milan, Lombardy 20132
  - **Telephone:** 39 0226431

**Naples**
- **Clinica Mediterranea SPA**
  - **Category:** Hospital
  - **Address:** Via Orazio 2
    - Naples, Campania 80122
  - **Telephone:** 39 0817259222

**Rome**
- **Policlinico Universitario ‘A.Gemelli’**
  - **Category:** Hospital
  - **Address:** Largo Agostino Gemelli 8
    - Rome, Lazio 00168
  - **Telephone:** 39 0630151

- **Salvator Mundi International Hospital**
  - **Category:** Hospital
  - **Address:** Viale delle Mura Gianicolensi 67
    - Rome, Rome 00152
  - **Telephone:** 39 06588961

**Venice**
- **Policlinico San Marco S.P.A (Casa di Cura)**
  - **Category:** Hospital
  - **Address:** Via Zanotto 40
    - Mestre
    - Venice, Veneto 30173
  - **Telephone:** 39 041 50 71 611
  - 39 041 5071935

## 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

Tap water is safe to drink.

#### Food Risk

Food is safe.

[More on food and water safety](#)

### Health Threats Summary

Health threats present include:

- **Animals:** Rabies
- **Bites and Stings:** Chikungunya, Leishmaniasis, West Nile Virus
- **Coughing/sneezing:** COVID-19
- **Environment:** Altitude, Volcano

[https://www.internationalsos.com/MasterPortal/PrintDisplay.aspx](https://www.internationalsos.com/MasterPortal/PrintDisplay.aspx)
Sex/blood/needles: HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and STIs

Health Threats

*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 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: try 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.

Italy

The first imported case was reported in late January 2020, in travellers from China. By mid-February a cluster of locally-acquired cases was recognised in Lombardy, in the north of Italy. The outbreak grew rapidly, and although strict public health measures were enacted, including stopping movement of people into and out of the most affected areas. However many travellers had already left the area, taking COVID-19 into other countries. Italy is now one of the most affected countries, with over 70,000 confirmed cases and more than 10,000 deaths by the final week of March.

For more information see:
- Italian Ministry of Health's Coronavirus Website
- COVID-19 Situation in Italy
- Department of Civil Protection (Dipartimento della Protezione Civile) dashboard of cases

Altitude | Threat from: Environment

Altitude illness is a potentially fatal condition that can affect people who normally live at a low altitude and travel to a higher altitudes. It can occur from elevations of 1,500 meters onwards, but is more common at elevations above 2,500 meters (8000 feet).

People most at risk are those who have experienced altitude illness before, people who have heart or lung problems and people under the age of 50. There are three different types of altitude illness: Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). AMS is the most common and mild form of altitude illness. HACE and HAPE are more severe. HACE is a medical emergency and if not treated and managed quickly, can result in coma and death. Management of altitude illnesses involves immediate descent and oxygen treatment. Most people who are affected, even those who develop HACE or HAPE, recover completely if moved to a lower elevation. There are medicines that can be administered by trained medical professionals.

Anyone travelling to high altitude, especially higher than 2,500 meters, should be aware of and recognise the symptoms of altitude illness. See your travel health professional before departure, for individual advice on preventive measures, especially if you have ever suffered altitude sickness in the past, or if you have an underlying medical condition.

Chikungunya | Threat from: Bites and Stings

People can get chikungunya if they are bitten by a mosquito carrying the virus. About four to seven days later, the infected person develops a sudden fever and severe joint pain. Pain is especially common in the knees, ankles, small joints (especially in hands and feet) and any previously injured area. Other common symptoms are a rash and headache.

There is no specific cure for the disease. Recovery takes several weeks.

There is no vaccine. The only way to prevent chikungunya is to prevent mosquito bites. Wear long sleeves and long pants, and use insect repellents to prevent mosquito bites.

Italy

A large outbreak occurred in Emilia Romagna in 2007, lasting from July through to September. In 2017, the Lazio region, central Italy, experienced an outbreak with clusters in the cities of Rome, Anzio and in the Latina Province.
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.
- Be aware of your risk when assisting anyone with an injury. Protect yourself from contact with bodily fluids.
- Seek medical attention within 24 hours if you accidentally come into contact with someone else's bodily fluids.

Leishmaniasis | Threat from: Bites and Stings

Leishmaniasis is a disease caused by a parasite that can infect humans, dogs, rodents and other small animals. It is transmitted by sandflies that bite mainly between dusk and dawn and can occur in both rural and urban environments. Sandflies breed quickly in unsanitary conditions, and the spread of the disease is exacerbated by war, chronic food shortages and urbanisation activities like deforestation and building of dams and irrigation systems, changes in temperature, heavy rainfall and population movement. The disease can manifest in one of the three forms, cutaneous (is the most common form and causes skin ulcers), mucocutaneous (is a rare form which affects the inner parts of the nose and mouth) or visceral (which is the more severe form and can lead to death). There is no vaccine or drug to prevent leishmaniasis.

Prevention

The only way to avoid leishmaniasis is to prevent sandfly bites.

- Minimise outdoor activities from dusk to dawn--this is when sand flies are most active.
- Use protective clothing and insect repellent.
- Consider using an insecticide treated bed net with fine mesh if there are sandflies in your living quarters. The standard bed nets used to prevent malaria are not effective, as sandflies are about one-third the size of mosquitoes and can fly through the malaria nets.
- Note that sandflies are small and do not make noise while flying. This makes it difficult to determine whether they are in your environment. Their bites cause mild symptoms and might not be noticed.

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.)
Volcano | Threat from: Environment

There are several types of volcanic eruptions and some pose a major threat to health. One such eruption is volcanic ash fall. Ash is made of fine particles of rock and minerals and is gritty and abrasive. It can carry for many kilometers through air. Approaching ash clouds resemble ordinary weather clouds, and are sometimes accompanied by lightning or thunder. They bring a sulfur smell into the air.

When the ash finally falls, it settles in a dust-like covering. The "dust", however, is hard and abrasive. It does not dissolve in water, and it conducts electricity. It becomes more conductive when wet. Heavy ash falls can cause roofs to collapse and can lead to high levels of respirable ash in the air people breathe.

Most commonly, people get a runny nose and sore throat, sometimes with dry cough. Because the ash is gritty, it can cause skin and eye irritation. People should minimize exposure to ash, those with chronic bronchitis, emphysema, asthma and other respiratory conditions should be especially vigilant since their symptoms can worsen.

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.

Italy

Human cases of WNV have been reported every year since 2008 in Italy. The transmission season typically runs from mid-June to end-October.