



June 16, 2016

Dear potential Olympic and Paralympic Team (Athletes, Coaches, IST and Staff),

We are getting very close to the start of the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is only 50 days to go to the Olympic Opening ceremonies and 83 until the Paralympic Games.

During the last 1.5 years we have done several trips to Rio and Juiz de Fora (our training camp location in Brazil, located ~160km NE of Rio), visiting during all the seasons of the year. Our last visit to Rio and Juiz de Fora was just a few weeks ago in May 2016 for the test events – hence wanting to send the most up-to-date information now. Team health and performance (in that order) are of the utmost importance to us. Accordingly, there are a couple of things we would like to address with this letter: 1) The risk of different mosquito borne viruses; 2) The facilities for the Games and our pre-Games camp in Juiz de Fora.

There has been tremendous and conflicting media hype about the Zika, H1N1 and Dengue viruses, (see IOC document attached). We have been in contact with different organisations researching our concerns. We have also spoken to one of the Medical Officers of infectious diseases at the World Health Organisation (WHO) about risks for our athletes/coaches/staff. At the present time the World Health Organization is officially downgrading the risk of mosquito borne viruses (see WHO letter attached).

Our conclusion after these lengthy investigations of the mosquito borne viruses is as follows:

- It is winter time when we are in Rio and Juiz de Fora and the cooler weather means the risk for mosquito borne illnesses is less. While in Rio itself, a major urban centre, the risk is lower still.
- Juiz de Fora is higher up in the mountains and so has cooler weather and thus less mosquitoes. (Of note during our last visit in Juiz de Fora we did not see any mosquitos (no staff had any bites over 4 days), including when Trent and Jared who ran in the bush on trails).
- As a precaution, we still recommend everyone to use mosquito spray (please pack your own DEET) and be prepared to wear long sleeves and pants when not training for daily mosquito protection.

Progress of facilities in Rio:

- The Olympic Stadium and warm up track now have Mondo surfaces, but there is still more work to be done on the stadium and warm up track with tents, displays etc., but we are confident that this will all be in place.
- Village has been completed and looks great (note: due to remote possibility of mosquito borne illnesses the village rooms now have air conditioning so windows can remain shut).
- We have only visited one training track – still some work to be done.
- The roads to the facilities still require extensive work and travel times to facilities could be lengthy (30 to 60 minutes each way, but we will not know for sure until the Games begin and how well “games traffic lanes” are actually implemented.
- COC’s Performance centre (for non-credited staff) looks great and is in very close proximity to the village (literally across the link).
- For more details (including photos) please see presentation on Portal, link in newsletter, and on website



Juiz de Fora:

- We have secured luxury buses (large seating areas in buses) that will take us to and from our camp location (~3hrs from Rio).
 - Note, on the way to Juiz de Fora, there is a 30min section uphill with switchbacks. If you are someone who normally gets travel sickness, you should pack Gravol. These switchbacks are bypassed on the way back to Rio).

Track (mondo; ~1.5km and walking/wheelchair road (~5km from hotel) in excellent condition, with all new equipment for all events at the training track.

- New weight room being constructed as we speak.
- Team hotel brand new with fully functioning air conditioning, next to shopping mall.
- For more information see presentation on Portal, link in newsletter, and on website
- Hotel kitchen inspected by Trent, with a very satisfactory outcome
 - Very clean with completely separate rooms/cleaning areas for all foods types (from salads, to meat, to fish to bakery).
 - Breakfast for the team will be in main lobby/breakfast area, while lunch and dinner will be separated and on 20th floor (Buffett style).
 - Jen Sygo, East Hub RD and Trent have already worked on full menu rotations, (7 rotations), which we can send to anyone interested (please email Trent).
 - Would still recommend 100% bottled water, no ice in water, and 100% of eating in the hotel.
- Juiz de Fora, as is the case for most of Brazil, is very hilly so there is no running right from the hotel. For a long-distance athlete, the running is limited to:
 - At the track, and the grass infield (1.5km bus ride away, but straight uphill).
 - A 2.1km cement loop at the track (part of the University), but rolling (including a longer hill)
 - Gravel roads/trails about a 20-25min drive away (transportation provided). Roads mainly have good footing, but in a few locations, there are some rocks and ruts.

In summary, we feel that the risk of mosquito borne viral illnesses are minimal and, at the very least, not significantly different in Juiz de Fora in the Brazilian winter as compared to Rio. We have a great training location in Juiz de Fora for any athlete that chooses to attend. If you have any specific questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact us at any time. All the best in your preparation and we are looking forward to see you all.

Yours in Sport,

Peter Eriksson
CTO/Head Coach

Dr. Trent Stellingwerff
IST Director

Dr. Paddy McClusky
Medical Lead



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Medical and Scientific Department

Health Advice relevant to the Olympic Games Rio 2016 in Brazil (adapted from WHO advice)

Vaccine preventable diseases

A medical consultation should be scheduled at least 4–8 weeks before departure in order to allow sufficient time for optimal immunization schedules to be completed and effective for both, routine vaccines and vaccines indicated according to the specific itinerary. However, even when departure is imminent, there is still time to provide both advice and possibly some vaccines. There is comprehensive medical cover at all venues as described in the Rio 2016 medical guide and in case of illness for any reason during the Games it is important to seek the advice of a health professional.

Routine vaccines

Routine immunizations should be checked including **diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps** and **rubella**. It is critical that measles and rubella vaccinations are up to date in order to prevent the importation of cases into Brazil (rubella was eliminated from Brazil in 2009).

Influenza: Travellers to Brazil should consider vaccination, particularly those at risk of serious complications of influenza (such as individuals with asthma or diabetes). The prevailing influenza strain currently circulating in Brazil A(H1N1) pdm09 (swine flu) is included in both Northern hemisphere 2015-2016 and Southern hemisphere 2016 vaccines. Travellers not already immunised in the last 9 months who decide to receive influenza vaccine should receive it at least two weeks prior to departure.

Travel-related vaccines

- **Hepatitis A** is recommended since Brazil is prone to hepatitis A outbreaks.

If travelling outside Rio and depending on the specific travel itinerary, vaccines that might be considered for some travellers include:

- **Typhoid fever:** advised if travelling to Manaus
- **Rabies:** the risk of rabies infection in Rio de Janeiro and the remaining five cities hosting the Games is negligible. Travellers visiting rural areas or deprived urban areas where canine vaccination rate is low should consider getting immunized.
- **Yellow fever:** The vaccination is recommended for travellers, older than 9 months, planning to visit areas at risk of yellow fever transmission (see: http://gamapserver.who.int/mapLibrary/Files/Maps/ITH_YF_vaccination_americas.png?ua=1). Vaccination is not recommended for travellers limiting their stay to Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and São Paulo.

Mosquito-borne diseases

In addition to yellow fever, mosquito-borne diseases transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes in many countries as well as Brazil include Zika virus disease, chikungunya, and dengue.

The Olympics will take place during the winter season in Rio de Janeiro when the cooler and drier weather will reduce mosquito populations, so the risk of infection due to mosquito borne diseases is at its lowest. Rio de Janeiro authorities are also undertaking an extensive programme of vector (mosquito) control activities and are increasing these activities in the lead up to, and during the Games.

Travellers should take personal protective measures throughout the whole day to prevent mosquito bites. In accordance with WHO advice these include the use of appropriate repellents and wearing of light-coloured loose fitting clothing. Repellents should contain either DEET (diethyltoluamide) 20% or more, or IR 3535, or Picaridin, and may be applied to exposed skin or to clothing (but not under clothing) and have been shown to be effective and safe, although some individuals may suffer skin sensitivity especially if applied over zealously and under clothing. The percentage of DEET does not increase its mosquito repelling power but rather increases its longevity of action, with repeat application normally needed several times a day. Repellents must be used in strict accordance with the label instructions, including regarding the duration of protection conferred. Any sunscreen should be applied first.

Zika virus disease

Zika virus infection usually causes a mild disease and the majority of cases of Zika virus infection show no symptoms. However there is scientific consensus that Zika virus is a cause of microcephaly and in very rare cases Guillain-Barré syndrome.

Zika virus is nearly always spread by mosquitoes, though cases of sexual transmission have been documented. Therefore, while measures to prevent mosquito bites are the most effective way to reduce the risk of Zika virus infection, on the basis of current knowledge about Zika virus disease and its complications, the following is recommended in accordance with the advice of the World Health organisation with whom the IOC are working closely:

- Pregnant women should not to travel to areas of ongoing Zika virus transmission, including Brazil.
- Pregnant women whose sexual partners live in or travel to areas with Zika virus transmission should adopt safer sexual practices (barrier contraception) or abstain from sex for the duration of their pregnancy.
- Travellers returning from areas where local transmission of Zika virus occurs should adopt safer sexual practices (barrier contraception) or abstain from sex for at least 4 weeks after their return to reduce the risk of onward transmission.
- Women planning to start a family should avoid conception for at least four weeks after leaving Brazil and consult a doctor.
- In case of suspected Zika virus infection see a medical practitioner for appropriate clinical management and testing. The test for Zika is improving but is still inaccurate, so the decision whether to test for Zika virus should be made on an individual basis in consultation with a medical practitioner.
- Travellers should not donate blood for at least one month after return.

WHO are continuing to monitor the situation, and as new scientific information on Zika is published the medical advice will be updated between now and the Games in August.

The latest travel advice and recommendations issued by WHO regarding Zika virus disease and travellers is available at:

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2016/zika-health-advice-olympics/en/>

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/zika/information-for-travelers/en/>

http://www.who.int/ith/updates/2016_04_11/en/

<http://www.who.int/emergencies/zika-virus/en/>

<http://www.who.int/features/qa/zika/en/>

Malaria

The risk of malaria transmission is negligible or non-existent except in the Northern states of Brazil including the city of Manaus (see: <http://portalsaude.saude.gov.br/images/jpg/2015/junho/24/Mapa-de-risco-2014.jpg>). In these areas, in addition to mosquito bite prevention, antimalarial tablets such as atovaquone–proguanil, or doxycycline, or mefloquine should be considered.

General advice

Food and water safety

Due to the high incidence of gastrointestinal infections in Brazil travellers should take precautions to avoid illnesses caused by unsafe food and drink. These include: frequent hand washing and always before handling and consuming food; making sure that food has been thoroughly cooked and remains steaming hot; choosing safe water (e.g. bottled water or, if in doubt, water vigorously boiled); avoiding any uncooked food, apart from fruits and vegetables that can be peeled or shelled; avoiding foods at buffets, markets, restaurants and street vendors if they are not kept hot or refrigerated/on ice. The safest food will be that provided in the Olympic Village and venues.

Recreational Water

The quality of recreational water areas in Rio de Janeiro has been known to vary and visitors should follow the advice issued by local authorities on whether it is safe to swim. A number of actions have been taken on the bodies of water being used for the Games to improve their water quality.

Sun protection and hydration

Travellers to Brazil should also take precautions about exposure to the sun by using sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat and avoid dehydration by drinking bottled water.

Health advice for visitors to Brazil issued by Brazilian health authorities is available at:

http://portalsaude.saude.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9656, and is also available from national authorities including the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/_layouts/forms/Publication_DispForm.aspx?List=4f55ad51-4aed-4d32-b960-af70113dbb90&ID=1486

WHO Public Health Advice Regarding the Olympics and Zika virus May 27, 2016

Based on current assessment, cancelling or changing the location of the 2016 Olympics will not significantly alter the international spread of Zika virus. Brazil is one of almost 60 countries and territories which to-date report continuing transmission of Zika by mosquitoes. People continue to travel between these countries and territories for a variety of reasons. The best way to reduce risk of disease is to follow public health travel advice.

WHO advises pregnant women not to travel to areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission. This includes Rio de Janeiro. Pregnant women's sex partners returning from areas with circulating virus should be counselled to practise safer sex or abstain throughout the pregnancy.

Anyone considering travel to the Olympics should

- follow the travel advice provided by their countries' health authorities, and consult a health worker before travelling.
- whenever possible, during the day, protect themselves from mosquito bites by using insect repellents and by wearing clothing – preferably light-coloured – that covers as much of the body as possible.
- practise safer sex (e.g. use condoms correctly and consistently) or abstain from sex during their stay and for at least 4 weeks after their return, particularly if they have had or are experiencing symptoms of Zika virus.
- choose air-conditioned accommodation (windows and doors are usually kept closed to prevent the cool air from escaping, and mosquitoes cannot enter the rooms).
- avoid visiting areas in cities and towns with no piped water and poor sanitation (ideal breeding grounds of mosquitoes) where the risk of being bitten is higher.

WHO/PAHO is providing public health advice to the Government of Brazil and the Rio 2016 Organizing Committee, on ways to further mitigate the risk of athletes and visitors contracting Zika virus during the Games. An important focus of WHO advice revolves around measures to reduce populations of *Aedes* mosquitoes which transmit chikungunya, dengue and yellow fever in addition to Zika virus.

Based on the current assessment of Zika virus circulating in almost 60 countries globally and 39 in the Americas, there is no public health justification for postponing or cancelling the games. WHO will continue to monitor the situation and update our advice as necessary.

For additional travel assessments from other public health agencies see:

- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention assessment published May 26, 2016: <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/t0526-npc.html>
- European Centres for Disease Prevention and Control published May 2016: <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Risk-assessment-mass%20gathering-Rio-2016-10May2016.pdf>

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