



Posted by WENDY PERRIN | JUNE 6, 2015

# Wendy Answers: How to Get Good Emergency Medical Care in Caribbean



***Hi Wendy, My family of six has done Bora Bora, Hawaii, Europe, the Bahamas, Bermuda, and ten Disney cruises. Now we're thinking about the British Virgin Islands. One of my biggest concerns, though, is medical care. I have lupus, my son has epilepsy, my husband has MS—so we really need to know that we can get medical help if needed. What do you think about renting a house in the British Virgin Islands?***

**—Kerry, Boston**

Kerry, in the Caribbean, to be assured of great medical care in an emergency, you basically need to either be on an island with a good hospital or get evacuated to one fast—which is easier said than done when you're on tiny islands. So, if you're worried about medical emergencies, choose a larger island with a good hospital.

In the British Virgin Islands, you might be tempted to rent one of those Gilligan's-Island-style bungalows on Jost Van Dyke, or to splurge on one of those posh villas on Virgin Gorda, but on such tiny islands, medical-care options are limited. The best hospital in the B.V.I. is Peebles Hospital, on the island of Tortola, so you might want to rent on Tortola. You can read the U.S. State Department's take on medical care in the B.V.I. here (click on the "Health" tab).

Two of the most reliable hospitals in the Caribbean are relatively near the B.V.I. Roy Lester Schneider Hospital on St. Thomas, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Hospitales HIMA San Pablo in San Juan, Puerto Rico, are both accredited by Joint Commission International and offer a wide range of services.

***Of course, the medical care you need depends on the emergency. "Most serious illnesses and injuries require transport to higher levels of care such as are found in Miami," says Ann Shannon, a spokesperson for Global Rescue, which provides emergency medical assistance and evacuation services to travelers worldwide. When Global Rescue needs to evacuate travelers in the Caribbean who have serious illnesses and injuries, it often evacuates them to Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital, a Center of Excellence.***

Kerry, I presume that when you and your family travel internationally, you purchase an emergency medical assistance policy so you can get suitable urgent care if necessary. Different travel insurance companies may make different assessments as to the quality of medical care at a destination, when evacuation is necessary, or where to evacuate you to. Global Rescue "has an extensive network of air ambulance providers throughout the region," says Shannon, "including one which maintains a base in Puerto Rico. It is important to note, however, that transports from locations in the southern Caribbean, such as Aruba, will take longer to arrive at a Center of Excellence than those in the northern Caribbean."

So, in a nutshell:

- Your safest bet may be to rent on an island with a good hospital.
- The more serious your health issues, the closer you may want to be to Miami.
- The farther you are from a good hospital, the more you'll need a good emergency-medical-assistance and evacuation provider on your side.

I hope that helps!

You'll find more travel advice from Wendy at [WendyPerrin.com](http://WendyPerrin.com).