

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax[®], a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

Democratic Republic of the Congo is a developing nation in the lowest 25% of the world's economies. Located in central Africa (north of Angola and south of Central African Republic), the climate classifications range from humid equatorial (long dry season) to humid equatorial (no dry season).

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

- | **Requirement:** A vaccination certificate is required for all travelers aged ≥ 9 months.
- | **Official Status:** listed by WHO as a country where YF transmission risk is present.

Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against cholera, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal meningitis, rabies, typhoid fever, or a one time polio booster if you haven't previously received one for travel. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2017) Malaria risk due predominantly to *P. falciparum* exists throughout the year in the entire country.

- | **Recommended prevention:** **C** – Risk of *P. falciparum* malaria, in combination with reported chloroquine and sulfadoxine–pyrimethamine resistance. Mosquito bite prevention plus atovaquone–proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to reported side effects and contraindications) ^a
- ^aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—*Health Information for International Travel* (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: All

- | Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: High
- | Drug resistance⁴: Chloroquine
- | Malaria species: *P. falciparum* > 90%, *P. ovale* 5%, *P. vivax* rare.
- | Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine.

⁴ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

High risk exists throughout the country, including in deluxe accommodations. Food and beverage precautions may reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

African trypanosomiasis, chikungunya, dengue, leishmaniasis, loiasis, onchocerciasis, West Nile virus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, Ebola virus disease, helminths, Marburg virus disease, monkeypox, plague, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the U.S. Department of State (DOS), U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Consular Travel Advice

Due to military conflict and ongoing security concerns, U.S. (DOS), Canada (GAC), and Australia (DFAT) advise avoiding travel to eastern and northeastern areas, the provinces of Kasai, Kasai-Central, and Kasai-Oriental and advise reconsidering travel (or avoiding nonessential travel) to the rest of this country. U.K. (FCO) has a more limited warning.

Terrorism Risk

No intrinsic risk of attack by terrorist groups exists, but unforeseen attacks are possible.

High risk of kidnapping by terrorist groups exists throughout the country, especially in North Kivu (especially Virunga National Park), South Kivu, Tanganyika, Haut-Lomami, Ituri, Bas-Uele, and Haut-Uele provinces. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners), nongovernmental organization workers, missionaries, and aid workers.

Crime

High risk of violent crime (armed robbery, home invasion, sexual assault, carjacking, and assault) and high risk of petty crime exist throughout the country (particularly after dark), especially in Kinshasa and the provinces of North Kivu (particularly Goma) and South Kivu, in crowded areas, and on public transportation.

Scams involving gems, precious metals, and false identity (such criminals posing as police officers or prearranged drivers) have been reported.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations occur throughout the country, especially in Kinshasa and other cities, and are generally peaceful, but have the potential to turn violent without warning. Road closures and transportation delays, including flights via N'djili International Airport, may occur.

Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities. Disruption to transportation, free movement, or the ability to carry out daily activities may occur.

Unsafe Areas

Armed conflict occurs and a dangerous security environment and military presence exist in Bas-Uele, Haut-Lomami, Haut-Uele,

Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika provinces.

Armed groups may be present in Virunga National Park.

Water Safety

Passenger boats may be unsafe, including ferries and small crafts traveling from Kinshasa to Brazzaville (Republic of Congo). Decline water transportation in vessels that appear overloaded or lack personal flotation devices or life jackets.

Transportation Safety

Significant risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road-traffic death rate is greater than 24 per 100,000 population, the highest risk category. Carefully assess the safety of transportation options before any road travel. Speed laws are poorly enforced. Driving at night is not advised. Seek local advice before traveling on roads outside urban areas after dark.

Traffic flows on the right-hand side of the road. Travelers (including drivers and pedestrians) accustomed to traffic moving on the opposite side should be vigilant when navigating traffic.

Natural Disasters

The rainy season is from April through October in northern areas and November through March in southern areas. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Seismic and volcanic activity frequently occurs.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Democratic Republic of the Congo

- | United States: [+243] 081-5560-151; cd.usembassy.gov
- | Canada: [+243] 99-60-21-500; canadainternational.gc.ca/congo
- | United Kingdom: [+243] 81-556-6200; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-kinshasa
- | Australia: Australia does not have an embassy or consulate in Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Democratic Republic of the Congo's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: www.ambardcusa.org
- | In Canada: [+1] 613-230-6391
- | In the U.K.: ambardc-londres.gouv.cd
- | In Australia: Democratic Republic of the Congo does not have an embassy or consulate in Australia.

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing is not required to obtain a tourist, work, or residence visa.

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