

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 US 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 classified as low income. 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).

Vaccinations

Yellow Fever

- *Requirement:* A certificate proving yellow fever vaccination 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, COVID-19, Ebola virus disease, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal meningitis, mpox, 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 US Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

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

(2021) 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. Community sanitation and food safety measures are generally inadequate. Some itineraries (e.g., remote destinations, austere accommodations) and activities (e.g., ecotourism, eating street or local-market food) further increase risk.

Travelers should observe food and beverage precautions, which 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 anthrax disease, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, helminths, hepatitis C, lassa fever, leptospirosis, Marburg virus disease, plague, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the US Department of State (DOS), the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development 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, US (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. UK (FCO) has a more limited warning.

Armed conflict between Congolese forces and militants has been reported in areas of North Kivu and Ituri provinces. A "state of seige" is in effect and the military administration, which has replaced the civilian administration, has extended security powers. The security situation is fluid, and the presence of heavily armed security forces should be expected. Travelers who are in the affected areas despite consular warnings should maintain a high level of security awareness, carry a fully charged communication device, follow the advice of local authorities, and monitor the situation through local media and embassy communications.

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 Kinshasha 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. 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, a dangerous security environment and military presence exist, and armed groups are present in Bas-Uele, Haut-Lomami, Haut-Uele, Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika, Kasai-Oriental, Kasai-Central, and Kasai 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 more 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.

Seat belt laws are poorly enforced.

Drunk driving laws are poorly enforced.

There are no restrictions on mobile phone usage while driving.

Structural standards for vehicles may not meet international standards.

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] 081-556-0151; 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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