

Afghanistan

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

Afghanistan is a developing nation classified as low income. Located in southern Asia (north and west of Pakistan and east of Iran), the climate is classified as dry (arid) to dry (semi arid), with cooler temperatures in some high altitude areas.

Vaccinations

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, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, tick-borne encephalitis, 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)

(2019) Malaria risk due to *P. falciparum* and *P. vivax* exists from May through November below 2000 m.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **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: April–December in all areas <2,500 m (8,202 ft).

- Drug resistance³ : Chloroquine.
- Malaria species: *P. vivax* 95%, *P. falciparum* 5%.
- Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, or tafenoquine.⁴

³ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

⁴ Primaquine and tafenoquine can cause hemolytic anemia in people with G6PD deficiency. Patients must be screened for G6PD deficiency before starting primaquine or tafenoquine. See *Tafenoquine Approved for Malaria Prophylaxis and Treatment* for more information.

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.

Other Food-Borne Illnesses

Precautions to prevent brucellosis may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Chikungunya, dengue, leishmaniasis, West Nile virus may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include anthrax disease, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, helminths, leptospirosis, plague, 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 terrorism, crime, and other ongoing security concerns, US (DOS), UK (FCO), Canada (GAC), and Australia (DFAT) advise avoiding all travel to this country.

The security situation is unpredictable. The embassies of the US, UK, Canada, and Australia have closed and withdrawn their staff. Travelers who are in this country despite consular warnings should maintain a high level of security awareness, carry a fully charged communication device, and monitor the situation through local media and consular bulletins.

Terrorism Risk

High risk of attack by domestic and transnational terrorist groups exists throughout the country. Targets may include domestic and international organizations and businesses; public places and events, including those frequented by tourists; and transportation systems.

High risk of kidnapping by terrorist groups exists throughout the country, including Kabul. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners), journalists, nongovernmental organization workers, missionaries, and aid workers.

Crime

High risk of violent crime (armed robbery, sexual assault, carjacking, and murder) exists throughout the country, mainly in rural areas. Low risk of petty crime exists throughout the country, mainly in urban areas.

Kidnappings by criminal groups occur throughout the country, including Kabul. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners), journalists, nongovernmental organization workers, missionaries, and aid workers.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations occur throughout the country and 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

A dangerous security environment and military presence exist, landmines and other unexploded ordnance may be present, and armed conflict may occur throughout the country.

Transportation Safety

High risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road traffic death rate is 12 to 24 per 100,000 population. The rate is less than 10 in most high-income countries.

Speed laws are poorly enforced.

There are no seatbelt laws.

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 December through April. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Winter storms frequently occur. Avalanches may occur, especially in mountainous areas.

Seismic activity frequently occurs.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Afghanistan

- United States: af.usembassy.gov
- Canada: travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates/afghanistan
- United Kingdom: www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-kabul
- Australia: afghanistan.embassy.gov.au

Afghanistan's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- In the U.S.: www.afghanembassy.us
- In Canada: www.afghanemb-canada.net
- In the U.K.: afghanistanembassy.org.uk
- In Australia: www.canberra.mfa.af

Visa/HIV Testing

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