Colombia

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

Colombia is a developing nation but is in the upper half of the world's economies. Located in northwestern South America along the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, its climate is tropical on the coasts and eastern plains and cooler in the highlands.

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

An official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary. Vaccination is usually recommended if you'll be traveling in areas where there is risk of yellow fever transmission.

- **Requirement:**
  A vaccination certificate is required for travelers 1 year of age and older coming from countries with risk of YF transmission. Note: This applies to airport layovers > 12 hours in these countries.

- **Supplementary requirement:** Colombia requires vaccination (given at least 10 days prior) for all persons, including travelers from all countries, entering: all municipalities in the departments of Amazonas, Caquetá, Casanare, Chocó, Guainía, Guaviare, Meta, Putumayo, Vaupés, and Vichada; the municipalities of Santa Marta, Ciénaga, and Aracataca (Magdalena Department); the municipalities of Convención, El Carmen, El Tarra, Teorama, Sardinata, Tibú, El Zulia, Hacari, and San Calixto (Norte de Santander Department); the municipalities of Dabeiba, Mutatá, Turbo, and Yondó (Antioquia Department); the wooded areas of the Orinoco, Meta, Vichada, Guaviare, Inirida, Vaupés, Putumayo, Caquetá, and Amazon rivers; and the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountains. Proof of vaccination must be carried at all times. Passengers may be required to show proof of vaccination at time of check-in or prior to boarding domestic flights to the designated areas.

- **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 hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, or typhoid fever. 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)**

(2016) Malaria risk is high in some municipalities of the departments of Antioquia (Apartadó, Turbo, Neococli, San Juan de Urabá, Arboletes, Cáceres, El Bagre, Tarazá, Zaragoza, Segovia Nechí, Caucasia, Remedios and Mutatá), Bolívar (San Pablo,
Tiquisio, Talaigua Nuevo, Cantagallo y Norosí), Cauca (Guapi, Timbiquí and López de Micay), Chocó (all municipalities),
Cordoba (the municipalities of Tierralta, Puerto Libertador, Valencia and Montelíbano), and Nariño (Tumaco, Barbacoas,
Roberto Payan, Mosquera, El Charco, Magui Payan, Santinga, Pizarro, Santa Bárbara de Iscuandé). A lesser risk exists in
some municipalities of Amazonas, Caqueta, Guaviare, Guainia, Meta, Putumayo, Vaupes, and Vichada. Chloroquine-resistant
*P. falciparum* is present.

- Recommended prevention in all 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: All areas below < 1,700 m (5,577 ft). None in Bogotá and Cartagena.

- Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: Low.
- Drug resistance 4: Chloroquine.
- Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 30%, *P. vivax* 70%.
- 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, with moderate risk 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**

Chagas’ disease (American trypanosomiasis), chikungunya, dengue, leishmaniasis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, West Nile
virus and Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

**Other Disease and Health Risks**

Additional concerns include air pollution, altitude illness, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis and 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 terrorism, drug trafficking, and other ongoing security concerns, Australia (DFAT) advises against travel to
Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca Department), Tumaco (Nariño Department), Chocó Department, and within 20 km (13 mi) of
the border with Venezuela and Ecuador, and against nonessential travel to the departments of Antioquia, Arauca, Caquetá,
Cauca, Guainía, Guaviare, Meta, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Valle del Cauca, and Vichada. U.K. (FCO) and
Canada (GAC) advise against travel or nonessential travel to more limited areas. U.S. (DOS) has no current warning.

**Terrorism Risk**

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

**Crime**
High risk of violent crime (armed robbery, sexual assault, carjacking, and murder) and petty crime exists in Bogotá (particularly in La Candelaria, Ciudad Bolívar, Kennedy, and Usaquen neighborhoods; Soacha, Cundinamarca Department; on nearby nature trails; and at El Dorado Airport), Medellín, Cali, and other cities throughout the country. Risk of violent crime exists in Cartagena and San Andrés y Providencia Department.

Kidnappings by criminal groups occur in rural areas throughout the country. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners), including foreigners working for oil and mining companies.

Express kidnappings to force cash withdrawals at ATMs occur throughout the country.

Scams involving counterfeit currency and false identity (such as criminals posing as police officers) have been reported.

Risk exists of robberies and/or assaults occurring after consuming intentionally drugged food or drink; tourists are frequently targeted. Scopolamine, via aerosol spray or paper handouts, is commonly used to incapacitate victims.

**Civil Unrest**
Protests and demonstrations frequently occur in major cities throughout the country, especially in Bogotá, 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 ability to carry out daily activities may occur. Monitor local media and foreign embassy communications in anticipation of demonstrations.

**Unsafe Areas**
Armed conflict occurs and a dangerous security environment exists throughout the country, especially in rural areas.

Lost City in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Magdalena Department) or Caño Cristales in Parque Nacional Natural de la Macarena (Meta Department): only visit with trained guides.

**Water Safety**
Passenger boats may be unsafe, including ferries, small crafts, and speedboats. Decline water transportation in vessels that appear overloaded or lack personal flotation devices or life jackets.

Rent water sports equipment from reputable operators. Only scuba dive with personnel certified by PADI or NAUI and only use equipment from PADI- or NAUI-certified dive operators.

**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 < 10 in most high-income countries. Speed laws are poorly enforced. Driving at night is not advised. Seek local advice before traveling on roads outside urban areas after dark.

Avoid public buses due to safety and security concerns, including armed robbery.

Many taxis are unsafe. Use taxis from official ranks or dispatched via smart phone app or radio from a reputable company. Ascertain the license or identification number of the dispatched vehicle.

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.

**Airline Safety**
U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the civil aviation authority of this country oversees its air carriers in accordance with minimum international safety standards.

**Natural Disasters**
The hurricane season is from June through November in coastal areas along the Caribbean Sea. The rainy seasons are from March through June and from September through November. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur. Seismic and volcanic activity frequently occur.
Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Colombia

- United States: [+57] 1-275-2000; bogota.usembassy.gov
- Canada: [+57] 1-657-9800; www.canadainternational.gc.ca/colombia-colombie
- United Kingdom: [+57] 1-326-8300; ukincolombia.fco.gov.uk/en
- Australia: [+57] 1-657-7801

Colombia’s Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- In the U.S.: www.colombiaemb.org
- In Canada: www.embajadacolombia.ca
- In the U.K.: reinounido.embajada.gov.co/
- In Australia: australia.embajada.gov.co/

Visa/HIV Testing

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

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