

# Democratic Republic of the Congo

## Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax<sup>®</sup>, 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

**Routine vaccinations** are essential due to a persistent rise of vaccine-preventable diseases (especially markedly high rates of diphtheria, pertussis, and measles) globally. Prior to travel, travelers should be up-to-date with the age-appropriate routine vaccinations recommended by their home country, which may include: COVID-19; *H. influenzae* type B (Hib); hepatitis A; hepatitis B; herpes zoster; human papillomavirus; influenza; measles, mumps, rubella; meningococcal; pneumococcal; polio; rotavirus; tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap preferred; consider an early pertussis booster for high-risk travelers); varicella.

## Yellow Fever

- *Requirement:* A certificate proving yellow fever vaccination is required for all travelers aged  $\geq 9$  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 chikungunya, cholera, dengue, Ebola virus disease, mpox, rabies, typhoid fever, or a one time polio booster if you haven't previously received one for travel.

## 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. Mosquito-bite prevention plus atovaquone-proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to drug-resistance pattern, reported side-effects and contraindications).<sup>a, b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Alternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

<sup>b</sup>In certain areas with multidrug-resistant malaria, mefloquine chemoprophylaxis is no longer recommended. At present, these areas include Cambodia, south-eastern Myanmar and Thailand.

*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 accurate date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided prior to 2013.

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

### Transmission areas

- All

### Drug resistance<sup>2</sup>

- Chloroquine

### Species

- *P. falciparum* (primarily)
- *P. malariae*, *P. ovale*, and *P. vivax* (less commonly)

### Recommended chemoprophylaxis

- Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, tafenoquine<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>3</sup> Tafenoquine can cause potentially life-threatening hemolysis in people with glucose-6-phosphate-dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency. Rule out G6PD deficiency with a quantitative laboratory test before prescribing tafenoquine to patients.

## 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

African trypanosomiasis, 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.

## Safety and Security

### Key Safety Risks

- Road conditions and traffic collisions
- Public transportation
- Maritime safety
- Petty crime
- Heightened crime risk for women
- Scams
- Natural disasters

### Key Security Threats

- Armed conflict
  - Risk of terrorist attacks by domestic and/or transnational groups
  - Risk of violent civil unrest
  - Risk of violent protests
  - Risk of security forces responding to protests with excessive force
  - Cross-border threats in areas bordering Burundi, Central African Republic, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Uganda
  - Violent crime
  - Kidnapping, which may target foreign nationals
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