

Dominican Republic

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

The Dominican Republic is a developing nation classified as upper middle income. Located in the Caribbean Sea (east of Haiti), the climate is classified as humid equatorial (long dry season).

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

Although yellow fever does not occur in Dominican Republic, an official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary.

- Requirement: A vaccination certificate is required for travelers aged ≥ 1 year coming from the states of Mina Gerais, Espírito Santo, São Paulo, and Rio de Janiero in Brazil. This also applies to airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) longer than 12 hours in these states.

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, 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)

(2019) Malaria risk due exclusively to *P. falciparum* exists throughout the year, especially in the western provinces of Dajabón, Elias Pina and San Juan. In 2015, transmission increased in the National District and the provinces of Santo Domingo and La Altagracia, specifically in Bávaro district. Risk in other areas is low to negligible. There is no evidence of *P. falciparum* resistance to any antimalarial drug.

- 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: Primarily in the provinces by the border with Haiti, and the provinces (including resort areas) of Santo

Domingo and La Altagracia. Rare locally transmitted cases in the city of Santo Domingo (Distrito Nacional) and other provinces.

- | Drug resistance³ : None.
- | Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 100%
- | Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Provinces bordering Haiti, and provinces of Santo Domingo (except Santo Domingo city [Distrito Nacional]) and La Altagracia: Atovaquone-proguanil, chloroquine, doxycycline, mefloquine, or tafenoquine.⁴ Santo Domingo (Distrito Nacional) city and other provinces: None (practice mosquito avoidance).

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. 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.

Other Food-Borne Illnesses

Precautions to prevent seafood poisoning may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Dengue, leishmaniasis, West Nile virus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections, 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.

Terrorism Risk

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

Crime

Moderate risk of violent crime (armed robbery, sexual assault, and assault) and high risk of petty crime exist throughout the country, especially in Santo Domingo, in beach resort areas, and along routes to and from Las Americas International Airport. Sexual assaults occurring in beach resorts have often been perpetrated by resort or hotel employees. Theft of items from checked baggage in airports is common.

Scams involving 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.

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.

Water Safety

Hazardous water conditions (including currents, tides, and undertows) may occur. Heed posted warnings, and avoid beaches that are not patrolled. Do not swim alone or after dark, and do not walk on any beach after dark.

Basic safety standards for recreational water activities (including scuba diving, snorkeling, and jet-skiing) may not be in place. Rent water sports equipment from reputable operators. Scuba dive only with personnel certified by PADI or NAUI, and use equipment only from PADI- or NAUI-certified dive operators.

Outdoor Safety

Basic safety standards for adventure activities (including eco-tourism activities) may not be in place. Travelers should only use reputable adventure-sport operators for activities and equipment rentals.

Transportation Safety

Very high 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. Seek local advice before traveling on roads outside urban areas after dark. Driving at night is not advised.

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.

Avoid public buses due to safety and security concerns.

Due to security concerns, travel on roads to and from Las Americas International Airport late at night or early in the morning is unsafe.

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

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. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Seismic and volcanic activity frequently occur.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Dominican Republic

- | United States: [+1-809] 567-7775; do.usembassy.gov
- | Canada: [+1-809] 262-3100; www.dominicanrepublic.gc.ca
- | United Kingdom: [+1-809] 472-7111; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-santo-domingo
- | Australia: [+1-809] 920-0020

Dominican Republic's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: drembassyusa.org
- | In Canada: [+1] 613-569-9893
- | In the U.K.: dominicanembassy.org.uk
- | In Australia: [+61] 02-4620-3247

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing may be required to obtain a work or residence visa.

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