Malaysia

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

Malaysia is a developing nation classified as upper middle income. Located in Southeast Asia in the South China Sea (south of Vietnam), the climate is classified as predominantly humid equatorial (no dry season), with cooler temperatures in some high-altitude areas.

Vaccinations

Routine vaccinations are essential due to a persistent global rise of vaccine-preventable diseases (**especially markedly high rates of diphtheria, pertussis, and measles**). Prior to travel, travelers should be up-to-date with the age-appropriate and risk-based routine vaccinations recommended by their home country, which may include:

- COVID-19
- ***H. influenzae*** type B (Hib)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B: Protection is especially important for those at increased risk.
- Herpes zoster
- Human papillomavirus
- Influenza
- Measles, mumps, rubella: A single early dose is recommended for travelers aged 6-11 months.
- Meningococcal
- Pneumococcal
- Polio
- Rotavirus
- Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis: Tdap preferred; consider an early pertussis booster for high-risk travelers.
- Varicella

Yellow Fever

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

- ***Requirement:***
  A certificate proving yellow fever vaccination is required for travelers aged ≥ 1 year coming from countries with risk of YF transmission. This also applies to airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) longer than 12 hours in risk countries.

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, Japanese encephalitis, mpox, rabies, or typhoid fever.

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)

(2022) Malaria risk exists only in limited foci in the deep hinterland of the states of Sabah and Sarawak and the central areas of Peninsular Malaysia. In 2021, no indigenous ***P. falciparum*** cases were reported and 23 imported ***P. falciparum*** cases were registered. Human ***P. knowlesi*** infection has been reported. Urban, suburban and coastal areas are free from malaria.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **B** – Risk of non-falciparum malaria. Mosquito-bite prevention plus chloroquine, or doxycycline or atovaquone-proguanil or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to drug-resistance pattern, reported side-effects and contraindications).[a]

  [a]Alternatively, 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 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

- Zoonotic transmission of ***P. knowlesi*** malaria occurs in rural, forested areas
- No malaria transmission in other areas, including Kuala Lumpur (the capital), in Penang State, on Penang Island, or in George Town (capital of Penang State)

Drug resistance[1]

- Previously, chloroquine

Species

- ***P. knowlesi***[6] (primarily)
- Previously, ***P. falciparum***, ***P. malariae***, ***P. ovale***, and ***P. vivax***

Recommended chemoprophylaxis

- In rural, forested areas: atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, tafenoquine[2]

  [1] Refers to ***P. falciparum*** malaria, unless otherwise noted.

  [2] Tafenoquine can cause potentially life-threatening hemolysis in people with glucose-6-phosphate-dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency. Test for G6PD deficiency with a quantitative laboratory test before prescribing tafenoquine to patients.

  [6] ***P. knowlesi*** is a malaria species with a simian (macaque) host. Human cases have been reported from most countries in Southwest Asia and are associated with activities in forest or forest-fringe areas. ***P. knowlesi*** has no known resistance to antimalarials.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

Moderate risk exists throughout the country, with minimal risk in deluxe accommodations. Community sanitation and food safety measures may be 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, seafood poisoning may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Lyme disease, murine typhus, scrub typhus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, altitude illness, helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Safety and Security

Key Safety Risks

- Road conditions and traffic collisions
- Public transportation
- Domestic air travel
- Maritime safety
- Petty crime
- Heightened crime risk for LGBTQ+ travelers
- Food and beverage spiking
- Scams
- Natural disasters

Key Security Threats

- Risk of terrorist attacks by domestic and/or transnational groups, which may target foreign nationals
- Risk of violent protests
- Occasional violent crime
- Kidnapping/hostage taking, which may target foreign nationals
- Piracy

Emergency Contacts

The national emergency number is 999.

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