Mexico

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

Mexico is a developing nation but is in the upper half of the world’s economies. Located between Central America and the U.S., its climate varies with geography, ranging from tropical to desert.

Immunizations

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, 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 due almost exclusively to *P. vivax* exists intermittently throughout the year in some rural areas that are not often visited by tourists. Low risk exists in some localities in Chiapas State (Costa). Localities with very low risk are situated in the states of Chihuahua, Durango, Nayarit, Quintana Roo and Sinaloa.

- Recommended prevention in moderate risk areas: A – Very limited risk of malaria transmission. Mosquito bite prevention only.

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: Present in Chihuahua, Chiapas, Durango, Nayarit, and Sinaloa. Rare cases in Campeche, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Sonora, and Tabasco. Rare cases in the municipality of Othon P. Blanco in the southern part of Quintana Roo bordering Belize. No malaria along the United States–Mexico border.

- Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: Very Low.
- Drug resistance: None.
- Malaria species: *P. vivax* 100%.
- Recommended chemoprophylaxis:
  - States of Chiapas, Chihuahua, Durango, Nayarit, and Sinaloa: Atovaquone-proguanil, chloroquine, doxycycline, mefloquine, or primaquine. (Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.)
  - States of Campeche, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Sonora, Tabasco, and Orthón P. Blanco municipality of Quintana Roo: Mosquito avoidance only.
Primaquine can cause hemolytic anemia in people with glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency. Patients must be screened for G6PD deficiency before starting primaquine.

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 brucellosis may be needed.

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, marine hazards and melioidosis.

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 ongoing violence and drug trafficking, U.S. (DOS) advises against nonessential travel to several areas throughout the country, especially borders along state lines, including some or all areas of the states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Colima, Jalisco, Michoacán, México, Morales, Nayarit, Sonora, Sinaloa, and Tamaulipas. This advice does not apply to major resort locations in well developed areas along the Pacific and Gulf/Caribbean coasts (e.g., Acapulco, Mazatlán, Cancún, Cozumel, and Playa del Carmen). Canada (GAC) and Australia (DFAT) advise against nonessential travel to more limited areas, including Guerrero (including Acapulco but excluding the cities of Ixtapa, Zihuatanejo, and Taxco), Durango, and Nuevo León states. U.K. (FCO) has no current warning.

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

Crime
High risk of violent crime (armed robbery, sexual assault, carjacking, and murder) and petty crime exists throughout most of the country, especially in Mexico City (particularly on the metro) and other cities, and resort areas. Risk of violent crime exists in areas frequented by tourists, including Acapulco, Cancún, Cabo San Lucas, Cozumel, and Playa del Carmen. Kidnappings by criminal groups occur throughout the country, especially in northern border cities, Mexico City, and the states of Guerrero, México, and Tamaulipas. Express kidnappings to force cash withdrawals at ATMs occur in Mexico City and other cities. Scams involving false identity (such as criminals posing as police officers), pirated merchandise, and unethical actions by health care providers have been reported. Risk exists of robberies and/or assaults occurring after consuming intentionally drugged food or drink; tourists are frequently targeted. Highest threat areas include resorts.
Civil Unrest
Protests and demonstrations frequently occur throughout the country, especially in Mexico City and Chiapas, Guerrero, Michoacán, and Oaxaca states, 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 may occur and a dangerous security environment may exist in the northern states of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa, Durango, and the southwestern states of Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, and Nayarit.

Water Safety
Basic safety standards for recreational water activities (including scuba diving, snorkeling, and jet-skiing) are often not in place. 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.

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 Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Seismic and volcanic activity frequently occur.

Consular Information
Selected Embassies or Consulates in Mexico
- Canada: [+52] 55-5724-7900; www.mexico.gc.ca
- United Kingdom: [+52] 55-1670-3200; ukinmexico.fco.gov.uk
- Australia: [+52] 55-1101-2200; www.mexico.embassy.gov.au

Mexico's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries
- In the U.S.: embamex.sre.gob.mx/eua
- In Canada: embamex.sre.gob.mx/canada_eng
- In the U.K.: www.sre.gob.mx/reinounido
- In Australia: www.mexico.org.au

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

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