

North Korea

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

North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) is a developing nation classified as low income. Located in eastern Asia along the Korea Bay and the Sea of Japan (south of China and north of South Korea), the climate is classified as predominantly humid cold (no dry season).

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

Although yellow fever does not occur in North Korea, 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 countries with risk of YF transmission. Note: This does not apply to airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) 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 hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, Japanese encephalitis, 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)

(prior 2013) Limited Malaria risk due exclusively to *P. vivax* exists in some southern areas.

- Recommended prevention in 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 southern provinces.

- Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: No data.
- Drug resistance⁴: None.
- Malaria species: Presumed to be 100% *P. vivax*.
- Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, chloroquine, doxycycline, mefloquine, or primaquine.⁵

⁴ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

⁵ 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

Moderate 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.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Scrub typhus may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include enteroviruses, hantavirus, helminths, marine hazards, snakebites, 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 ongoing security concerns, U.S. (DOS) and Canada (GAC) advise avoiding all travel to this country. U.K. (FCO) and Australia (DFAT) advise reconsidering travel (or avoiding nonessential travel) to this country. Note: As of September 1, 2017, U.S. passports will be invalid for travel to, through, and within North Korea; special passport validation may be granted under limited circumstances.

Terrorism Risk

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

Crime

Negligible risk of violent crime exists throughout the country.

Low risk of petty crime exists throughout the country, mainly in Pyongyang International Airport and public markets.

Transportation Safety

National incidence data on traffic-related injury or death are not available.

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.

Natural Disasters

The monsoon season is from June through September, coinciding with the typhoon season. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in North Korea

- | United States: The U.S. does not have an embassy or consulate in North Korea.
- | Canada: Canada does not have an embassy or consulate in North Korea.
- | United Kingdom: [+850] 2-381-7982; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-pyongyang
- | Australia: Australia does not have an embassy or consulate in North Korea.

North Korea's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: North Korea does not have an embassy or consulate in the U.S.
- | In Canada: North Korea does not have an embassy or consulate in Canada.
- | In the U.K.: North Korea does not have an embassy or consulate in the U.K.
- | In Australia: North Korea does not have an embassy or consulate in Australia.

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV and hepatitis testing are required to obtain a work or residence visa. Travelers, including short-term travelers, may be detained or deported after arrival if found to be positive for HIV or hepatitis.

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