

Papua New Guinea

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

Papua New Guinea is a developing nation classified as lower middle income. Located between the Coral Sea and the South Pacific Ocean, the climate classifications range from humid equatorial (no dry season) in the north to humid equatorial (long dry season) in the south, with cooler temperatures in some high-altitude areas.

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

Although yellow fever does not occur in Papua New Guinea, 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. This also applies to all airport transit stops 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, typhoid fever, or a one time polio booster if you haven't previously received one for travel. 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 predominantly to *P. falciparum* exists throughout the year in the entire country below 1800 m. *P. vivax* resistance to chloroquine has been reported.

- 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: Present throughout the country at altitudes < 2,000 m (6,561 ft)

- Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: High.
- Drug resistance⁴: Chloroquine (both *P. falciparum* and *P. vivax*)

- | Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 65%-80%, *P. vivax* 10%-30%, *P. malariae* and *P. ovale* rare.
- | Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine

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

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

Chikungunya, dengue, scrub typhus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, sexually transmitted infections, 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 civil unrest and postearthquake security concerns, U.S. (DOS) advises reconsidering travel (or avoiding nonessential travel) to Highlands Region and areas near the Panguna mine in Bougainville Autonomous Region. U.K. (FCO) and Australia (DFAT) have more limited warnings. Canada (GAC) 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, home invasion, sexual assault, carjacking, and assault) exists throughout the country, especially in areas frequented by tourists; in isolated hiking areas; in Port Moresby (Parliament House area), Madang (Madang Province), and Lae (Morobe Province), including along the highway between Lae and Lae Nadzab Airport and the Highland Highway (particularly between the towns of Goroka and Kainantu); in the tourist resorts surrounding Milne Bay.

High risk of petty crime exists in cities, especially in Port Moresby, Lae (Morobe Province), and Mount Hagen (Western Highlands Province).

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. Disruption to transportation, free movement, or the ability to carry out daily activities may occur.

Unsafe Areas

A dangerous security environment exists on the Kokoda Track and in informal settlement areas.

Ethnic tensions may be present in Port Moresby and the provinces of Enga, Hela, and Western Highlands.

Landmines and other unexploded ordnance may be present along the Kokoda Track and in Milne Bay and the town of Rabaul.

Restricted areas may exist in areas surrounding the Panguna mine, Bougainville Autonomous Region.

Water Safety

Passenger boats may be unsafe, including ferries and small crafts traveling between islands. Decline water transportation in vessels that appear overloaded or lack personal flotation devices or life jackets.

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.

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 less than 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.

Traffic flows on the left-hand side of the road. Travelers (including drivers and pedestrians) accustomed to traffic moving on the opposite side should be vigilant when navigating traffic.

Road-traffic collisions can lead to violent confrontations.

Public buses do not meet international safety standards (due to unsafe vehicles and poor maintenance).

Taxis are unsafe. Use a privately hired driver.

Natural Disasters

The rainy season is from December through March, coinciding with the typhoon season. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Seismic and volcanic activity frequently occurs, especially in East New Britain Province, West New Britain Province, and on Manam Island in Madang Province.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Papua New Guinea

- | United States: [+675] 7200-9439; pg.usembassy.gov
- | Canada: Canada does not have an embassy or consulate in Papua New Guinea.
- | United Kingdom: [+675] 303-7600; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-port-moresby
- | Australia: [+675] 325-9333; www.png.embassy.gov.au

Papua New Guinea's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: www.pngembassy.org
- | In Canada: Papua New Guinea does not have an embassy or consulate in Canada.
- | In the U.K.: www.pnghighcomm.org.uk
- | In Australia: www.pngcanberra.org

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing is required to obtain a work or residence visa.

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