

South Africa

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

South Africa is a developing nation classified as upper middle income. Located at the southern tip of Africa (south of Botswana and Namibia), the climate is extremely diverse with classifications that range from humid temperate (no dry season) to dry (arid).

Vaccinations

Routine vaccinations are essential due to a persistent rise of vaccine-preventable diseases (especially markedly high rates of diphtheria, pertussis, and measles) globally. Prior to travel, travelers should be up-to-date with the age-appropriate routine vaccinations recommended by their home country, which may include: COVID-19; *H. influenzae* type B (Hib); hepatitis A; hepatitis B; herpes zoster; human papillomavirus; influenza; measles, mumps, rubella; 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 South Africa, 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, 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)

(2020) Malaria risk due predominantly to *P. falciparum* exists throughout the year in the low-altitude areas of Mpumalanga Province (including the Kruger National Park), Limpopo Province, and north-eastern KwaZulu-Natal Province. Risk is highest from October through May.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **C** – Risk of *P. falciparum* malaria. Mosquito-bite prevention plus atovaquone-proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to drug-resistance pattern, reported side-effects and contraindications).^{a, b}

^aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

^bIn certain areas with multidrug-resistant malaria, mefloquine chemoprophylaxis is no longer recommended. At present, these areas include Cambodia, south-eastern Myanmar and Thailand.

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

- Along the border with Mozambique and Zimbabwe
- KwaZulu-Natal Province: uMkhanyakude District; the districts of King Cetshwayo and Zululand (few cases) Limpopo Province: the districts of Mopani and Vhembe; the districts of Capricorn, Greater Sekhukhune, and Waterberg (few cases)
- Mpumalanga Province: Ehlanzeni District
- Kruger National Park

Drug resistance²

- Chloroquine

Species

- *P. falciparum* (primarily)
- *P. malariae*, *P. ovale*, and *P. vivax* (less commonly)

Recommended chemoprophylaxis

- KwaZulu-Natal Province (uMkhanyakude District); Limpopo Province (the districts of Mopani and Vhembe); Mpumalanga Province (Ehlanzeni District); and Kruger National Park: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, tafenoquine³
- All other areas with malaria transmission (including the districts of King Cetshwayo and Zululand in KwaZulu-Natal Province, and the districts of Capricorn, Greater Sekhukhune, and Waterberg in Limpopo Province): No chemoprophylaxis recommended (insect bite precautions and mosquito avoidance only)⁴

² Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria, unless otherwise noted.

³ Tafenoquine can cause potentially life-threatening hemolysis in people with glucose-6-phosphate-dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency. Rule out G6PD deficiency with a quantitative laboratory test before prescribing tafenoquine to patients.

⁴ Mosquito avoidance includes applying topical mosquito repellent, sleeping under an insecticide-treated mosquito net, and wearing protective clothing (e.g., long pants and socks, long-sleeve shirt). For additional details on insect bite precautions, see Sec. 4, Ch. 6, Mosquitoes, Ticks & Other Arthropods.

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 may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tick-bite fever, West Nile virus may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, anthrax disease, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, plague, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis.

Safety and Security

Key Safety Risks

- Traffic collisions
- Public transportation
- Petty crime
- Heightened crime risk for women
- Food and beverage spiking
- Theft of vehicles
- Scams
- Cybersecurity

Key Security Threats

- Risk of terrorist attacks by domestic and/or transnational groups
- Risk of violent protests
- Violent crime
- Kidnapping, which may target foreign nationals
- Random acts of armed violence

Emergency Contacts

The national emergency number from a landline is 10111 and from a mobile phone is 112.

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