

South 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

South Korea (Republic of Korea) is an advanced economy classified as high income. Located in eastern Asia along the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea (south of North Korea), the climate classifications range from humid temperate in the south to humid cold (dry winter) in the north.

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, Japanese encephalitis, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, tick-borne encephalitis, 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)

(2019) Limited Malaria risk due exclusively to *P. vivax* exists mainly in the northern areas of Gangwon-do and Gyeonggi-do provinces and in Incheon City (towards the demilitarized zone or DMZ).

- 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: Limited to the months of March-December in rural areas in the northern parts of Incheon, Kangwon-do, and Kyōnggi-do Provinces, including the demilitarized zone (DMZ).

- Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: Low.
- Drug resistance⁴: None
- Malaria species: *P. vivax* 100%
- 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, with minimal risk 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

Lyme disease, scrub typhus, West Nile virus may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, avian influenza, enteroviruses, hantavirus, helminths, marine hazards, 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.

Terrorism Risk

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

Crime

Low risk of violent crime (sexual assault and assault) and low risk of petty crime exist throughout the country, mainly in Seoul and other cities, especially in areas frequented by tourists such as crowded entertainment, nightlife, and shopping districts.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations frequently occur and are generally peaceful but have the potential to turn violent without warning. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities.

Water Safety

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. Driving at night is not advised. Seek local advice before traveling on roads outside urban areas after dark.

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 typhoon season is from June through November. The monsoon season is from June through August. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in South Korea

- | United States: [+82] 2-397-4114; kr.usembassy.gov
- | Canada: [+82] 2-3783-6000; www.korea.gc.ca
- | United Kingdom: [+82] 2-3210-5500; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-seoul
- | Australia: [+82] 2-2003-0100; www.southkorea.embassy.gov.au

South Korea's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: overseas.mofa.go.kr/us-ko/index.do
- | In Canada: overseas.mofa.go.kr/ca-ko/index.do
- | In the U.K.: overseas.mofa.go.kr/gb-ko/index.do
- | In Australia: overseas.mofa.go.kr/au-ko/index.do

Visa/HIV Testing

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

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