

# Thailand

## Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax<sup>®</sup>, 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

Thailand is a developing nation classified as upper middle income. Located in Southeast Asia (south of Laos and north of Cambodia), the climate is extremely diverse with classifications that range from humid equatorial (no dry season) to subtropical dry winter.

## 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 Thailand, 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  $\geq 9$  months 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, dengue, Japanese encephalitis, 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)

(2022) Malaria risk exists throughout the year in rural (especially forested and hilly) areas of the country, mainly toward the international borders, including the southernmost provinces. There is no risk in cities (e.g. Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Pattaya), urban areas, Samui Island, and the main tourist resorts of Phuket Island. However, there is a risk in some other areas and islands. *P. falciparum* resistance to mefloquine and to quinine has been reported from areas near the borders with Cambodia and Myanmar. Artemisinin resistance has been reported near the border with Cambodia. *P. vivax* resistance to chloroquine has been reported. Human *P. knowlesi* infection has been reported.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **A** – Very limited risk of malaria transmission. Mosquito bite prevention only.
- Recommended prevention in areas near Cambodia and Myanmar borders: **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).<sup>a, b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Alternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

<sup>b</sup>In 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

- Primarily the provinces that border Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia (rare cases in Buri Ram Province), and Malaysia (especially in the rural forest and forest-fringe areas of these provinces)
- Rare to few cases in other parts of Thailand, including the cities of Bangkok (the capital), Chiang Mai, and Chiang Rai, or on the islands of Koh Pha Ngan, Koh Samui, or Phuket
- No malaria transmission on the islands of Krabi Province (Koh Lanta, Koh Phi Phi, Koh Yao Noi, Koh Yao Yai) or in Pattaya City

### Drug resistance<sup>2</sup>

- Chloroquine and mefloquine

### Species

- *P. vivax* (80%)
- *P. falciparum* (< 20%)
- *P. knowlesi*<sup>6</sup>, *P. malariae*, and *P. ovale* (rare)

### Recommended chemoprophylaxis

- Provinces that border Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia (except Buri Ram Province), and Malaysia: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, tafenoquine<sup>3</sup>
- All other areas with malaria transmission (including Buri Ram province): No chemoprophylaxis recommended (insect bite precautions and mosquito avoidance only)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> *P. knowlesi* is a malaria species with a simian (macaque) host. Human cases have been reported from most countries in Southwest Asia and are associated with activities in forest or forest-fringe areas. *P. knowlesi* has no known resistance to antimalarials.

## Other Concerns

### Travelers' Diarrhea

Moderate risk exists throughout the country, including 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, seafood poisoning may be needed.

## Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Leishmaniasis, murine typhus, scrub typhus, West Nile virus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

## Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, anthrax disease, enteroviruses, helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, monkey bites, Nipah virus, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

## Safety and Security

### Key Safety Risks

- Road conditions and traffic collisions
- Domestic and/or international air travel
- Maritime safety
- Petty crime
- Heightened crime risk for women
- Food and beverage spiking
- Scams

### Key Security Threats

- Unresolved conflict with breakaway region
- Terrorist attacks by domestic and/or transnational groups
- Risk of violent civil unrest
- Risk of violent protests
- Risk of security forces responding to protests with excessive force
- Cross-border threats in areas bordering Burma (Myanmar) and Cambodia
- Explosions in public places
- Landmines
- Occasional violent crime
- Piracy

### Emergency Contacts

The police emergency number is 191. The tourist police number is 1155 (or use the Thailand Tourist Police app, which does not require a local SIM card).