Vietnam

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

Vietnam is a developing nation classified as lower middle income. Located in Southeast Asia along the South China Sea (east of Cambodia and Thailand), the climate is classified as humid equatorial (short dry season) in the north and humid equatorial (long dry season) in the south.

Vaccinations

Routine vaccinations are essential due to a persistent global rise of vaccine-preventable diseases (**especially markedly high rates of diphtheria, pertussis, and measles**). Prior to travel, travelers should be up-to-date with the age-appropriate and risk-based routine vaccinations recommended by their home country, which may include:

- COVID-19
- ***H. influenzae*** type B (Hib)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B: Protection is especially important for those at increased risk.
- Herpes zoster
- Human papillomavirus
- Influenza
- Measles, mumps, rubella: A single early dose is recommended for travelers aged 6-11 months.
- Meningococcal
- Pneumococcal
- Polio
- Rotavirus
- Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis: Tdap preferred; consider an early pertussis booster for high-risk travelers.
- Varicella

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against chikungunya, 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)

(2019) Malaria risk due predominantly to ***P. falciparum*** exists in the entire country, excluding urban centres, the Red River delta, the Mekong delta, and the coastal plain areas of central Viet Nam. High-risk areas are the highland areas below 1500 m south of 18˚N, notably in the four central highlands provinces of Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Gia Lai and Kon Tum; in Binh Phuoc Province; and in the western parts of the coastal provinces of Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Quang Nam and Quang Tri. Resistance to mefloquine has been reported.

- 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]

[a]Alternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand–by emergency treatment (SBET).

[b]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

- Rural areas only; rare cases in the Mekong and Red River Deltas
- None in the cities of Da Nang, Hai Phong, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Nha Trang, and Quy Nhon

Drug resistance[1]

- Chloroquine and mefloquine

Species

- ***P. vivax*** (55%)
- ***P. falciparum*** (44%)
- ***P. knowlesi***[6], ***P. malariae***, and ***P. ovale*** (rare)

Recommended chemoprophylaxis

- Provinces of Binh Duong, Binh Phuoc, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Gia Lai, Khanh Hoa, Kon Tum, Lam Dong, Ninh Thuan, Tay Ninh: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, tafenoquine[2]
- All other areas with malaria transmission (except Mekong and Red River Deltas): Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, tafenoquine[2]
- Mekong and Red River Deltas: No chemoprophylaxis recommended (insect bite precautions and mosquito avoidance only)[4]

[1] Refers to ***P. falciparum*** malaria, unless otherwise noted.

[2] Tafenoquine can cause potentially life-threatening hemolysis in people with glucose-6-phosphate-dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency. Test for G6PD deficiency with a quantitative laboratory test before prescribing tafenoquine to patients.

[4] Mosquito avoidance includes applying topical mosquito repellant, 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 Mosquitoes, Ticks, and Other Arthropods chapter.

[6] ***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

Severe fever with thrombocytopenia syndrome, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, anthrax disease, avian influenza, helminths, hepatitis C, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, monkey bites, plague, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Safety and Security

Key Safety Risks

- Road conditions and traffic collisions
- Public transportation
- Petty crime
- Heightened crime risk for women
- Food and beverage spiking
- Scams
- Cybersecurity
- Natural disasters

Key Security Threats

- Risk of violent protests
- Risk of security forces responding to protests with excessive force
- Landmines/unexploded ordnance
- Occasional violent crime

Emergency Contacts

The police emergency number is 113.

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