

Preparing for Your Trip to India

Before visiting India, you may need to get the following vaccinations and medications for vaccine-preventable diseases and other diseases you might be at risk for at your destination: (Note: Your doctor or health-care provider will determine what you will need, depending on factors such as your health and immunization history, areas of the country you will be visiting, and planned activities.)

To have the most benefit, see a health-care provider at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for your vaccines to take effect and to start taking medicine to prevent malaria, if you need it.

Even if you have less than 4 weeks before you leave, you should still see a health-care provider for needed vaccines, anti-malaria drugs and other medications and information about how to protect yourself from illness and injury while traveling.

CDC recommends that you see a health-care provider who specializes in Travel Medicine. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with any doctors you are

currently seeing for other medical reasons.

If your travel plans will take you to more than one country during a single trip, be sure to let your health-care provider know so that you can receive the appropriate vaccinations and information for all of your destinations.

Although yellow fever is not a disease risk in India, the government requires travelers arriving from countries where yellow fever is present to present proof of yellow fever vaccination. If you will be traveling to one of these countries where yellow fever is present before arriving in India, this requirement must be taken into consideration.

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Vaccination or Disease	Recommendations or Requirements for Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
Routine	Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine, etc.
Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG)	Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in countries with an intermediate or high level of hepatitis A virus infection where exposure might occur through food or water. Cases of travel-related hepatitis A can also occur in travelers to developing countries with "standard" tourist itineraries, accommodations, and food consumption behaviors.

Hepatitis B	Recommended for all unvaccinated persons traveling to or working in countries with intermediate to high levels of endemic HBV transmission especially those who might be exposed to blood or body fluids, have sexual contact with the local population, or be exposed through medical treatment (e.g., for an accident).
Typhoid	Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in South Asia, especially if visiting smaller cities, villages, or rural areas and staying with friends or relatives where exposure might occur through food or water.
Rabies	Recommended for travelers spending a lot of time outdoors, especially in rural areas, involved in activities such as bicycling, camping, or hiking. Also recommended for travelers with significant occupational risks, such as veterinarians, for long-term travelers and expatriates living in areas with a significant risk of exposure, and for travelers involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats. Children are considered at higher risk because they tend to play with animals, may receive more severe bites, or may not report bites. Note: Rabies vaccine is temporarily in short supply.
Japanese encephalitis	Recommended if you plan to visit rural farming areas and under special circumstances, such as a known outbreak of Japanese encephalitis.
Polio	Recommended for adult travelers who have received a primary series with either inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) or oral polio vaccine (OPV). They should receive another dose of IPV before departure. For adults, available data do not indicate the need for more than a single lifetime booster dose with IPV.

Malaria

Drugs to Prevent Malaria (antimalarial drugs)

If you will be visiting a malaria risk area in India, you will need to take one of the following antimalarial drugs: atovaquone/proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine (primaquine in special circumstances and only after G6PD testing).

Note: Chloroquine is NOT an effective antimalarial drug in India and should not be taken to prevent malaria in this region.

Malaria risk area in India: Risk in all areas throughout country except no risk in areas above 2,000 m (>6,561 ft) in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu, Kashmir, and Sikkim. Risk also exists in urban areas below 2000 m, including Delhi and Mumbai (Bombay).

Malaria symptoms may include

- fever
- headache
- fatigue
- chills
- body aches
- sweats
- nausea and vomiting

Malaria symptoms will occur at least 7 to 9 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Fever in the first week of travel in a malaria-risk area is unlikely to be malaria; however, you should see a doctor right away if you develop a fever during your trip.

Other Diseases Found in South Asia

Risk can vary between countries within this region and also within a country; the quality of in-country surveillance also varies.

The following are disease risks that might affect travelers; this is not a complete list of diseases that can be present. Environmental conditions may also change, and up to date information about risk by regions within a country may also not always be available.

Dengue fever has caused epidemics in most South Asian countries. In 2005-2006, an outbreak of chikungunya affected thousands of persons in India. Filariasis is common. A sharp rise in the incidence of visceral leishmaniasis has been observed in several South Asian countries. Cutaneous leishmaniasis is present in Afghanistan (where it has infected US troops). Japanese encephalitis occurs widely except in mountainous areas of South Asia. Protecting yourself against insect bites (see below) will help to prevent these diseases.

Leptospirosis, a bacterial infection often contracted through recreational water activities in contaminated water, is common in tropical areas of the South Asia region.

Indigenous wild polio was present in 2005-2006 in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan; cases from

Bangladesh and Nepal were confirmed in 2005-2006.

Measles occurs in the South Asia region and can be a source of infection for unvaccinated travelers.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) continues to cause outbreaks in domestic and wild bird populations and has caused human cases in several South Asian countries. Avoid all direct contact with birds, including domestic poultry (such as chickens and ducks) and wild birds, and avoid places such as poultry farms and bird markets where live birds are raised or kept. For a current list of countries reporting outbreaks of H5N1 among poultry and/or wild birds, view updates from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and for total numbers of confirmed human cases of H5N1 virus by country see the World Health Organization (WHO) Avian Influenza website.

For more information, see the Geographic Distribution of Potential Health Hazards to Travelers and Goals and Limitations in determining actual disease risks by destination.

Staying Healthy During Your Trip

Be Careful about Food and Water

Diseases from food and water are the leading cause of illness in travelers. Follow these tips for safe eating and drinking:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, learn how to make water safer to drink.
- Do not eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Make sure food is fully cooked.
- Avoid dairy products, unless you know they have been pasteurized.

Diseases from food and water often cause vomiting and diarrhea. Make sure to bring diarrhea medicine with you so that you can treat mild cases yourself.

Avoid Injuries

Car crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers. Protect yourself from these injuries by:

- Not drinking and driving.
- Wearing your seat belt and using car seats or booster seats in the backseat for children.
- Following local traffic laws.
- Wearing helmets when you ride bikes, motorcycles, and motor bikes.
- Not getting on an overloaded bus or mini-bus.
- Hiring a local driver, when possible.
- Avoiding night driving.