



Ecuador

The following information must be viewed as a guide only. It is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice.

Specific travel health advice and recommendations on vaccination and anti-malarial medication are always provided on an individual basis taking into account:

- the personal health of the traveller including past medical and vaccination history;
- intended activities;
- precise itinerary;
- style of travel;
- type of accommodation;
- time of year;
- altitude, and;
- length of stay.

As well, decisions to recommend vaccines against some diseases like rabies and tuberculosis are very much influenced by local disease risk. Obtaining specific, face-to-face advice is particularly important when deciding on the most appropriate medications to prevent malaria and treat other conditions like travellers' diarrhoea that may arise during the trip.

All travellers should seek advice from a doctor experienced in travel health prior to departure.

Medical and nursing staff at The Travel Doctor-TMVC have expertise in international public health issues with a focus on immunisation and preventive medicine. Many have travelled extensively and a number have worked in less developed areas

of the world for extended periods. All travellers, whether short-term holidaymakers, business people or long term expatriate workers, should undergo individual risk assessments.

The Travel Doctor-TMVC has clinics Australia wide. In Australia the local clinic may be contacted on 1300 658 844, or by visiting www.traveldoctor.com.au. It is recommended that you visit a travel health professional 6-8 weeks prior to departure. However, if that time frame is not possible, remember: "It's never too late to vaccinate".

Healthy Travelling in Ecuador

Although small in size, Ecuador offers diverse experiences to travellers including the Amazon jungle, Inca ruins, the Andes Mountains, and the wildlife of the Galapagos. Visitors can trek in the mountains, relax on tropical beaches or dive with marine life in the Galapagos Islands national park.

Pre-travel preparation will help keep you healthy while you are away. The table below provides a brief description of some of the major travel health concerns and vaccinations that should be considered when visiting Ecuador.

We hope you find this information useful in preparing for your trip. Remember it is advisable to consult a travel health specialist prior to departure.

It is important to make sure that routine immunisations such as tetanus and diphtheria are up-to-date, to check whether Yellow Fever vaccination may be required, and to consider other vaccinations like hepatitis A and typhoid depending on individual risk.

Table 1: Major Travel Health Issues & Considerations for Ecuador

Altitude sickness	Altitude sickness can affect people not used to breathing thinner air at high altitude. It is a risk for travellers to the Andes region. It is important to allow enough time to acclimatise at high altitude to reduce the likelihood of altitude sickness. In some situations, medication can be used to assist the process of acclimatisation.
Chickenpox	This very common infectious disease can be prevented through immunisation. Many people miss the disease in childhood only to have a more severe illness as an adult. Travel puts one at higher risk of exposure. If there is no history of having had the illness, a blood test can confirm whether one is at risk.
Cholera	Cholera is a severe diarrhoeal disease caused by a bacteria. It is common in developing countries & is associated with conditions of poverty & poor sanitation. Cholera can cause rapid & severe dehydration. Travellers to Ecuador who follow the rules of eating & drinking safely will minimise their risk. There is also an oral vaccine available for cholera which may be recommended in certain circumstances.
Dengue Fever	Dengue (pronounced den-gee) Fever is a viral disease with flu like symptoms that is transmitted by mosquitoes. Outbreaks occur in Ecuador, particularly in the coastal provinces. There is no vaccine for Dengue Fever & prevention is based on avoiding mosquito bites using repellents, nets & insecticides.
Hepatitis A	This is a viral disease of the liver which is transmitted through eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water. It is the most common vaccine preventable disease that occurs in travellers to less developed areas of the world. It is strongly recommended for travel to Ecuador.
Hepatitis B	This is a viral disease of the liver that is transmitted through contact with blood, blood products or bodily fluids. It is vaccine preventable. Hepatitis B immunisation is now part of the childhood immunisation schedule. Many adult travellers have missed this very important immunisation & travel may be a good reason for vaccination.



Malaria	Malaria is transmitted by a night-biting mosquito. The risk is highest in travellers visiting the Amazon Basin; less in travellers visiting the eastern coast & highland areas of Brazil. A decision on whether or not to take anti-malarial drugs should be made after consultation with a travel health specialist, taking into consideration the malaria risk in areas to be visited as well as potential side effects & cost of available drugs. Insect bite avoidance measures should be used throughout the trip. Any flu-like illness occurring during or after the trip should be investigated by a travel health specialist.
Influenza	Individuals intending to travel out of an Australian winter might consider the current flu vaccine at the beginning of the season. Exposure to flu at airports & in other crowded places is common & becoming unwell can ruin a much needed break. In fact, influenza is likely to be the most common vaccine-preventable disease faced by travellers.
Measles, Mumps & Rubella	These diseases are more common in countries where childhood immunisation coverage is not as high as in Australia. Travellers born during or after 1966 should check that they have either had measles or else 2 doses of measles vaccine. Since 1989 this may have been as the combination MMR (measles, mumps & rubella) vaccine. Those born before 1966 are likely to have long-term immunity from natural exposure during childhood.
Rabies	Rabies is a deadly viral infection of the brain transmitted from animals to humans. The disease is rare in travellers but the risk increases with extended travel & animal contact. The best way to prevent rabies is to avoid all contact with animals. Dogs are the main carriers; however monkeys, bats, cats & other animals may also have the disease. Pre-exposure vaccination is recommended for extended travel & those who work with, or are likely to come in contact with animals.
Tetanus, Pertussis & Diphtheria	Tetanus is caused by a toxin released by a bacteria commonly found in dust or soil, which enters the body through a wound. Diphtheria is a bacterial infection of the throat & occasionally of the skin. It is found worldwide & is spread from person-to-person by coughing & sneezing. Pertussis (Whooping Cough) is a highly-infectious respiratory infection responsible for 300,000 deaths annually, mainly in children. Diphtheria & pertussis vaccines can be added to the tetanus vaccine. Because many adults no longer have immunity from childhood vaccination, travellers to less developed countries are advised to have a tetanus, diphtheria & pertussis booster.
Travellers' diarrhoea	Up to 40% of tourists may develop 3 or more loose bowel motions a day within the first week of travel. A variety of germs can be responsible for this infection. A traveller's medical kit containing appropriate therapy can rapidly improve symptoms. The oral cholera vaccine has been shown to provide protection against some forms of traveller's diarrhoea.
Typhoid Fever	Typhoid Fever is caused by a bacteria found in contaminated food & water. It is common in the developing world & vaccination is recommended for travellers to areas where environmental sanitation & personal hygiene may be poor. The adventurous eater venturing 'off the beaten' path should certainly consider vaccination.


Malaria is found in & around the Amazon Basin. Malaria risk & prevention options should be discussed with a travel medicine specialist prior to departure if visiting the Amazon while in Ecuador.

Altitude Sickness can occur in Ecuador when visiting the Andes region. Travellers should be aware of the symptoms of altitude sickness & allow themselves time to acclimatise beforehand. Medication can be used to speed-up acclimatisation in some situations. This should be discussed with a travel medicine specialist prior to departure.

Yellow Fever vaccination is required of all returning travellers who have visited high-risk areas in Ecuador. Yellow Fever vaccination should be discussed with a travel medicine specialist prior to departure.

Additional fact sheets can be found at the Travel & – TMVC website: www.traveldoctor.com.au. These have more information about:

- eating & drinking safely;
- avoiding insect bites;
- managing jet lag;
- safe sex;
- managing travellers' diarrhoea, &;
- Travellers' Medical Kits.



Remember to check the DFAT 'Smartraveller' website www.smartraveller.gov.au prior to departure



Travel Health Fact Sheet **Ecuador**
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Clinics Australia Wide. To find your nearest clinic call **1300 658 844** or visit www.traveldoctor.com.au