GENERAL INFORMATION

Ecuador is a developing nation but is in the upper half of the world's economies. Located along the equator on the west coast of South America, its climate is tropical along the coast and in jungle lowlands, and cooler inland at higher elevations.

IMMUNIZATIONS

- **Hepatitis A**—*Recommended for:* all travelers.
- **Typhoid fever**—*Recommended for:* all travelers.
- **Influenza**—Risk exists throughout the year in the tropics. *Recommended for:* all travelers due to demonstrated influenza risk in this group. Immunity may have declined in those vaccinated > 6 months earlier; consider an additional dose using the most recently available vaccine formulation. Consider oseltamivir as standby therapy, especially for those who are at high risk for complications from influenza or inadequately vaccinated.
- **Hepatitis B**—*Recommended for:* prolonged stays; frequent short stays in this or other high risk countries; adventure travelers; the possibility of acupuncture, dental work, or tattooing; all health care workers; the possibility of a new sexual partner during the stay; injection drug users; and travelers with high potential to seek medical care in local facilities. Increased awareness is recommended regarding safe sex and body fluid/blood precautions.
- **Yellow fever**
  - **Requirement (for entry):** A vaccination certificate (valid for life) is required for travelers 1 year of age and older coming from countries with risk of YF transmission. *Note:* This applies to airport layovers > 12 hours in such countries.
  - **Recommendation (for health protection):**
    - *Recommended for travelers 9 months of age and older:* areas east of the Andes Mountains below 2,300 m (7,500 ft) (see map). Daytime insect precautions are essential for unvaccinated travelers.
    - *Not recommended except for highly risk-averse travelers and long-stay travelers:* itineraries limited to areas west of the Andes Mountains below 2,300 m except Guayaquil (see map). No human cases of YF have ever been reported from these areas, and data analysis by WHO indicates extremely low potential for YF virus exposure.
    - *Not recommended:* itineraries limited to the cities of Guayaquil, Quito, Cuenca, or Otavalo; the Cotopaxi Volcano; areas above 2,300 m; or the Galápagos Islands.
  - **Official Status:** listed by WHO as a country where YF transmission risk is present.
- **Measles, mumps, rubella**—*Indicated for those born in 1957 or later (1970 or later in Canada and U.K.; 1966 or later in Australia) without evidence of immunity or of 2 adequate doses of live vaccine at any time during their lives. Also indicated for those born before 1970 (in Canada) without evidence of immunity or vaccination with measles-containing vaccine at or after age 1 year.
- **Polio**—Adult polio boosters are not recommended for travel to this country.
- **Rabies**—Significant risk from bats exists in most jungle areas. Dog rabies rarely occurs. *Recommended for prolonged stays:* all travelers and expatriates, with a priority for young children. *Recommended for shorter stays:* adventure travelers, hikers, cyclists, and cavers; locations more than 24 hours' travel from a reliable source of human rabies immune globulin and rabies vaccine for postexposure treatment; occupational exposure (such as veterinarians and wildlife professionals); and all travelers likely to have contact with bats. *Consider for:* risk-averse travelers with shorter stays desiring maximum pre-travel preparation. Dog, other terrestrial mammal, and bat bites or scratches should be taken seriously and postexposure prophylaxis sought even in those already immunized. The Galapagos Islands only: Risk from bats is presumed to exist throughout the island. No rabies is present in canines or other mammals. *Recommended for:* all travelers likely to have contact with bats. Bat bites or scratches should be taken seriously and postexposure prophylaxis sought even in those already immunized.
- **Routine vaccinations** (adults only)
  - *Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis.* Due to increasingly frequent pertussis outbreaks worldwide, all travelers should receive Tdap vaccine every 10 years, assuming they previously received an adequate primary series. Those who received Td or TT for their most recent booster should receive an immediate dose of Tdap, regardless of interval since the last tetanus dose.
  - *Pneumococcal.* Recommended for adults aged ≥ 65 years and all adults with chronic disease or immunocompromising conditions.
  - *Varicella.* Indicated for all persons born outside the U.S. or born in the U.S. after 1979, except not indicated for persons with an adequate vaccination history (2 lifetime doses), reliable evidence of previous infection, or laboratory confirmation of immunity.
MALARIA

- **General malaria information:** predominantly *P. vivax*. Transmission occurs throughout the year.
- **Location-specific recommendations:**
  - **Chemoprophylaxis is recommended for all travelers:** altitudes below 1,500 m (4,900 ft) in certain municipalities of the following provinces (see map): Esmeraldas, Sucumbíos, Orellana, Pastaza, Los Ríos [10], and Guayas [11]; all cities and towns within these areas except the central urban area of Esmeraldas.
  - **Chemoprophylaxis is recommended for certain travelers:** altitudes below 1,500 m in certain municipalities of the following provinces (see map): Esmeraldas, Manabi, Sucumbíos, Orellana, Pastaza, Bolívar [9], Los Ríos [10], Guayas [11], and Morona-Santiago; all cities and towns within these areas except Guayaquil and the central urban areas of Coca and Babahoyo.
  - **Insect precautions only are recommended (negligible transmission is reported):** the central urban areas of Esmeraldas, Coca, and Babahoyo; altitudes below 1,500 m in all other areas not mentioned above (see map) except the Galápagos Islands and the following cities: Portoviejo, Manta, Tena, Macas, Machala, and Santa Elena.
  - **No preventive measures are necessary (no evidence of transmission exists):** the cities of Quito, Guayaquil, Portoviejo, Manta, Tena, Macas, Machala, and Santa Elena; the Galápagos Islands; altitudes above 1,500 m (see map); all other areas not mentioned above.

- **Preventive measures:** Evening and nighttime insect precautions are essential in areas with any level of transmission. Atovaquone/proguanil (Malarone or generic), doxycycline, and mefloquine are protective in this country. Drug choice depends on personal factors discussed between the traveler and medical provider.
  - No preventive measure is 100% effective. Immediate medical attention is necessary for fever or influenza-like illness within 3 months after travel in a malaria risk area. Include mention of travel history.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues for Medical Providers to Consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors favoring chemoprophylaxis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Adventure travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Risk-averse and vulnerable travelers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Areas subject to infrequent epidemics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Immigrants visiting friends and relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Flexible itineraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Travel longer than 1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Unreliable medical expertise and/or treatment drugs at destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors against chemoprophylaxis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Air-conditioned hotels only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Urban areas only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Non-transmission season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Minimal nighttime exposure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Travel shorter than 3 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See "Technical Explanation of Malaria Mapping" for more information.

TRAVELER’S DIARRHEA

- Minimal risk exists in deluxe accommodations; high risk exists elsewhere. Food and beverage precautions are essential to reduce the likelihood of illness.
- Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and a quinolone antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe.

OTHER CONCERNS

- **Current Health Bulletin - updated March 11, 2016 (posted January 18, 2016)**

First Cases of Zika: According to WHO and Ecuador’s Ministry of Health, more than 150 cases of Zika virus infection have been reported in the western half of the country (including Quito Cantón) since January 15, 2016; the outbreak has yet to peak. Cases have also been reported in the Galápagos Islands. Because of limits on the vector, mosquito-borne transmission in areas above 2,000 m (6,600 ft) does not occur. Zika had not previously been reported in Ecuador. Zika virus, transmitted by mosquitoes, is a flavivirus from the same family as dengue and West Nile viruses. Travelers are advised to practice daytime insect precautions. Pregnant women (in any trimester) from non-affected areas should not travel to affected areas in this country. WHO considers the current outbreak in this country part of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. WHO states that there is an association between Zika virus infection during pregnancy and microcephaly and other documented birth abnormalities. An increased incidence of Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) or laboratory confirmation of Zika virus infection among GBS cases is occurring. Zika virus infection should be considered in any traveler (especially pregnant women) who reports Zika-like illness during or within 2 weeks of returning from this country. For more information, see Travax Medical Library: Zika.
• **Tuberculosis:** This disease is common in all developing countries and also presents risk in certain developed countries. This country, while not in the highest risk category, has an incidence of over 25 cases per 100,000 population. Travelers planning to stay more than 3 months should have pre-departure PPD skin test status documented. Those who expect to have close contact with the local populace should be tested if staying more than 1 month. Travelers should avoid persons who are coughing in crowded public places whenever possible. Domestic help should be screened for TB.

• **Dengue:** Significant risk exists in urban and rural areas throughout the country at elevations below 2,500 m (8,200 ft), including the Galápagos Islands. No risk exists in Quito. Transmission occurs throughout the year with highest activity from January through September. Daytime insect precautions are recommended.

• **Chikungunya:** Risk is limited to the western half of the country, especially in Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Guayas, and Manabí provinces. Daytime insect precautions are recommended.

• **Marine Hazards:** Risk from jellyfish, including highly venomous bluebottle jellyfish, exists. Travelers wading, launching boats, or fishing are especially at risk. Risk from coral and sea urchins exists. Coral is limited to Galápagos Islands. Travelers should seek out and heed posted warnings and refrain from bathing at unmarked, unpatted beaches.

• **Leishmaniasis:** Cutaneous and mucocutaneous leishmaniasis are common on both sides of the Andes below approximately 2,000 m (6,600 ft), especially in Amazonian regions; additional patchy foci exist in the Andes between approximately 2,300 and 2,500 m (7,500 and 8,200 ft). Insect precautions (primarily evening and nighttime) are recommended.

• **Snakebites:** Risk of envenomation exists in areas with dense vegetation or rock formations, especially at night or in warm weather. Most snakebites result from startling snakes; do not disturb or handle snakes. Boots and long pants are recommended in high-threat situations. Medical care is indicated after any snakebite.

• **Chagas' Disease (American Trypanosomiasis):** Risk to travelers is unknown but is presumed to be low in rural areas throughout the country. Travelers should avoid overnight stays in houses constructed of mud, adobe brick, or palm thatch.

• **Bartonellosis:** Risk exists primarily in Loja, Guayas, and Zamora-Chinchipe provinces and less commonly in Manabí Province. Risk to travelers is low. Insect precautions are recommended.

• **Altitude Illness:** Chemoprophylaxis with acetazolamide should be considered for travelers anticipating rapid ascent to sleeping altitudes above 2,800 m (9,200 ft). The elevation of Quito is 2,800 m.

• **Leptospirosis:** Risk exists for those engaged in hiking, biking, swimming, and other activities that involve extensive fresh water exposure. Consider doxycycline prophylaxis for those likely to encounter intense exposure.

• **Air Pollution:** Air quality is frequently unhealthy. Travelers to Santo Domingo should reduce prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. People with lung disease and those at extremes of age should avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. People with lung disease and those at extremes of age traveling to Cuenca, Latacunga, or Quito should reduce prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion.

### MEDICAL CARE

- Adequate private medical care that meets most international standards is available in Quito, Cuenca and Guayaquil. Medical care throughout the rest of the country is inadequate and usually does not meet international standards. One or more JCI accredited hospitals are present in this country. Highly specialized cases or complex emergencies will require evacuation. United States is a frequent destination.
- For a public ambulance in Quito and Ibarra, call 911. For a public ambulance in Guayaquil, Cuenca, and Loja, call 112. For a public ambulance elsewhere, call 102.
- Hyperbaric chambers for diving injuries are located in Guayaquil and Puerto Ayora.
- Cash payment is expected prior to treatment, including emergency care. There is no clear information as to whether credit cards are accepted for medical care.

### TRAVEL ADVISORY

The material below has been compiled or quoted verbatim from the consular websites of 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), and, in some cases, the U.S. Overseas Security Advisory Council and internationally recognized media sources. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel are not included in this advisory. Please refer to the “Safety and Security” handout for standard precautions.

**Consular Travel Warning**

Due to drug trafficking, the presence of armed groups, and other ongoing security concerns, Canada (GAC) advises against travel to areas bordering Colombia and Peru. At least one other government concurs.

**Consider Avoiding**
Travel to some areas bordering Colombia is dangerous due to the presence of drug traffickers and criminal organizations and the risk of violence (including during demonstrations), kidnappings, armed assaults, and extortion. There have been reports of tourists and foreign oil workers being held against their will in these areas. Armed robberies have also been reported at jungle lodges in the areas of Lower Rio Napo and Cuyabeno National Park.

There are land mines and unmarked minefields in the Cordillera del Cóndor, near the Peruvian border.

Crime

- Crime is a severe problem in Ecuador. Street crimes, including purse snatching, car break-ins, thefts, pickpocketing, and violent carjackings, are daily occurrences in major cities. Thieves, including children, often work in teams.
- Sexual assaults and armed robberies have been reported near the Pichincha volcano. Travelers should not walk outside the limits of the Teleferico or its pathways, and avoid hiking to the antennas of the volcano via Cruz Loma, west of Quito. Robberies at gunpoint have also been reported along the hiking trail up Cerro Mandango near Vilcabamba. Those robbed, often foreigners, report being accosted by a group of masked, armed men while hiking along the trail.
- Armed assaults can occur in public parks in and around transportation terminals, especially in Guayaquil, Quito, Manta, and Cuenca. In Quito, exercise caution in the areas of El Panecillo, La Carolina Park, Guápulo, Old Quito, South Quito, and particularly the popular tourist sector of Mariscal Sucre. Sexual assaults can also occur in the Mariscal Sucre district. There have been reports of criminals using incapacitating drugs such as scopolamine on unsuspecting tourists in order to rob and/or assault them.
- In Guayaquil, tourists should be vigilant when visiting the downtown area, the waterfront (El Malecón), the market area, and the Christ Statue (Sagrado Corazón de Jesús) on Cerro del Carmen. Avoid wandering on deserted beaches, especially at night. Random attacks at gunpoint, robberies, and sexual assaults involving foreigners have occurred in the Riobamba area.
- Luggage theft is common at airports, bus terminals, buses (city and regional), and other transit points.
- A common scam involves squirting liquids (ketchup, mustard, water, etc.) onto the victim and then stealing their bag while 'helping' to clean up. This technique is used across Ecuador.
- Robberies and assaults against taxi passengers, known locally as "secuestro express" continue to present a significant safety concern, especially in Guayaquil and Manta, but also with increasing regularity in Quito. Shortly after the passenger enters a taxi, the vehicle is typically intercepted by armed accomplices of the driver, who threaten passengers with weapons, rob passengers of their personal belongings, and force victims to withdraw money from ATMs. Increasingly, victims have been beaten or raped during these incidents.
- In urban centers, thieves target cars stopped in traffic for break-ins. The hotel zones in Quito, which are frequented by a high number of foreign tourists who are believed to carry valuables, are often targeted by thieves and muggers. Both Ecuadorians and foreigners are regularly robbed when leaving banks in Quito and other major cities. Backpackers are also targeted. Most of the criminals in and around Quito use weapons.

Civil Unrest

- Public transportation is often disrupted during demonstrations. Protesters may burn tires, throw rocks and Molotov cocktails, engage in destruction of private and public property, and detonate small improvised explosive devices during demonstrations. Police response may include water cannons and tear gas.
- Strikes and disturbances by local fishermen in the Galápagos Islands sometimes impact the movement of tourists and access to some sites.
- Curfews and states of emergency may be declared in regions affected by civil unrest, natural disasters, or other disruptions. During states of emergency, authorities have expanded powers to restore order, including suspension of some constitutional rights and expanded detention powers.
- Foreigners are prohibited from protesting in Ecuador and may be subject to arrest for participating in any demonstrations.

Miscellaneous Safety

- Treks and hiking excursions into Ecuador's mountains should be undertaken in groups, with experienced, certified tour guides only.

Public Transportation

- Robberies and assaults are reported regularly on intercity and urban Guayaquil buses, especially after dark. Bus
drivers often make illegal stops to pick up new passengers on express routes, especially on the routes between Guayaquil and Cuenca and between Guayaquil and Riobamba. Travel after dark, either by long-distance or international coaches, must be avoided.

Natural Disasters and Climate

- Ecuador has many active and potentially active volcanoes, including around the capital of Quito and other popular tourist destinations. Other potential environmental threats include flooding, forest fires, earthquakes, and tsunamis. Severe flooding occurs in many areas of the western provinces of Manabi, Los Ríos and Guayas, particularly in Chone, Portoviejo, and parts of Guayaquil.
- The hurricane season extends from early June to the end of November.

FAA Advisory

- 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.

Visa/HIV Testing

- Visa applicants may need to meet specific requirements. Review the application and contact the appropriate embassy or consulate with questions. The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors to or foreign residents of Ecuador.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Ecuador

- U.K. Embassy: Tel.: [+593] 2-2970-800, 2970-801, ukinecuador.fco.gov.uk/en
- Australian Consulate: Tel.: [+593] 4-601-7529

Ecuador's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- In the U.S.: www.ecuador.org
- In Canada: Tel.: [+1] 613-563-8206, 563-4286
- In the U.K.: www.consuladoecuador.org.uk
- In Australia: Tel.: [+61] 02-6286-4021

Travax content represents decision-relevant, expert synthesis of real-time data reconciled with new and existing available advice from authoritative national and international bodies. Recommendations may differ from those of individual countries' public health authorities. Travax country-specific recommendations pertain to healthy adult travelers. Guidance regarding pediatric and special needs travelers can be found under the relevant topic in the Travax Medical Library.

© Shoreland, Inc. All rights reserved. Revision 031416.