

# Ecuador

## Basic Protective Measures

Many travel-related health and safety problems can be significantly reduced through appropriate behavior by the traveler. Risk can be minimized by adherence to the following measures.

### Health

#### Insect Precautions

- | Wear clothing that covers as much as skin as practicable.
- | Apply a repellent containing DEET (30%–35% concentration); many brands are available.
- | Alternatively, apply a repellent containing picaridin (20% concentration or greater for tropical destinations).
  - | Picaridin products in the U.S. with 20% concentration include Natrapel (Tendercorp) and Picaridin Insect Repellent (Sawyer). Picaridin is also known as Icaridin in some countries.
  - | Picaridin, unlike DEET, has a pleasant smell and does not dissolve plastic materials.
- | Apply repellent to all exposed, nonsensitive areas of the body. Frequent application ensures continuous protection.
  - | *Applicable to malaria risk countries:* Mosquitoes that transmit malaria (*Anopheles* mosquitoes) are generally night biters.
  - | *Applicable to dengue, chikungunya, Zika, or yellow fever risk countries:* Mosquitoes that transmit these diseases (*Aedes* mosquitoes) are generally day biters, with peak biting times during the early morning and late afternoon hours.
  - | *Applicable to West Nile virus or Japanese encephalitis risk countries:* Mosquitoes that transmit these diseases (*Culex* mosquitoes) are most active at dusk and again at dawn.
  - | *Applicable to leishmaniasis risk countries:* Sandflies that transmit leishmaniasis are active from dusk to dawn.
- | Treat outer clothing, tents, and sleeping bag liners with permethrin (or other pyrethroid) when traveling in an area of very high risk for mosquito-borne or tick-borne diseases.
  - | *Applicable to malaria and Japanese encephalitis risk countries:* If not sleeping in a sealed air-conditioned room in an area where a high risk exists for these diseases, sleep under a permethrin-impregnated bed net. Regularly check the net for rips and tears, and keep it tucked in around the bed at all times. Ensure that all open windows have insect screens.
- | Use an aerosol insecticide before going to bed and a vaporizer device throughout the night.
- | Use a smoldering pyrethroid coil outdoors to repel flying insects.
- | Perform a full body check at least once a day in areas where tickborne disease is a risk.
- | *Applicable to African trypanosomiasis risk countries:* Wear light-colored (not blue), heavyweight clothing in risk areas; DEET is generally ineffective.

#### Safe Food and Beverages

- | Eat well-cooked, hot foods.
- | Always wash hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- | Avoid eating food from market stalls and street vendors.
- | Avoid tap water and drinks or ice made from tap water, unless advised of their safety by a reliable source.
- | Avoid buffets where food covers or fly controls are not used and where food has been sitting out for many hours.
- | Avoid high-risk food such as shellfish, raw or undercooked foods, unpasteurized dairy products, mayonnaise, cold sauces/salsas, fruits you haven't peeled yourself, and salads. Use sealed bottled water or treated water for drinking and brushing teeth (See *Treating Water*).

#### Blood-Borne and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

- | Use condoms in all sexual encounters; unprotected casual sex, whether with local residents or with fellow travelers, always poses a high risk.
- | Understand that inhibitions are diminished when traveling away from the social constraints of home; excessive use of alcohol and recreational drugs can influence behavior and encourage unintentional risk exposure.

- | Avoid sexual relations with commercial sex workers.
- | Avoid skin-perforating procedures (acupuncture, piercing, or tattooing).
- | Unless in a life-threatening situation, avoid invasive medical or dental procedures in unaccredited medical facilities; request proof of accreditation by Joint Commission International or other international bodies.
- | Consider carrying disposable needles, syringes, and sutures for remote travel.

## Swimming and Water Exposure

- | Heed posted warnings and avoid beaches that are not patrolled.
- | Do not swim alone or after dark and do not walk on any beach after dark.
- | Avoid use of alcohol or mind-altering drugs while engaging in water sports. Avoid water where sewage contamination or algae are present. Avoid any exposure (rafting, swimming, or wading) in water known to be infected with schistosomiasis (bilharzia).
- | Scuba dive only with personnel certified by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) or the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), and use equipment only from PADI- or NAUI-certified dive operators.
- | Follow established timetables for air travel after diving. The time from the end of the dive until the boarding of an aircraft is generally between 12 and 24 hours, depending on the type of dive.
- | Decline water transportation in vessels without personal flotation devices or life jackets.
- | Wear appropriate footwear when walking, wading, or swimming to avoid injury and exposure to parasites and poisonous plants and animals.
- | Hikers, bikers, and adventure travelers with exposure to water or wet environments may consider prophylaxis with 200 mg of doxycycline once per week (or 100 mg per day if in use for concomitant malaria prophylaxis) in developing countries where a substantial risk of leptospirosis exists.
- | Sit on a towel, blanket, or piece of clothing if a chair or hammock is not available because sand may be contaminated in areas frequented by animals. Thoroughly shake out all fabrics after use.
- | Avoid eating mackerel, tuna, bonito, mahi-mahi, or amberjack due to risk of scombroid poisoning.

## Rabies

- | Never assume that an animal or bat is free of rabies.
- | Avoid entering caves due to the possibility of exposure to bats and their droppings.
- | Do not handle or feed pets, unknown animals (especially dogs and monkeys), or bats. Children need to be closely supervised.
- | If bitten, scratched, or licked on broken skin, cleanse the wound immediately with soapy water and seek postexposure prophylaxis for rabies (even if rabies vaccine was completed before exposure) or herpes B virus (transmitted by monkey bites).
- | Consider minimizing going running or bicycling in high-risk rabies areas.

## Skin/Wound Care

*Extra vigilance, as outlined below, is recommended.*

- | Clean any bite, cut, or broken skin with safe water. Broken skin may become infected and lead to serious problems. Apply an antiseptic solution or spray.
- | Increasing pain, redness, or discharge from a cut suggests a spreading infection and may require antibiotic treatment. Seek medical help if this occurs.
- | Hats and sunscreen are mandatory in the tropics. Sunscreen should always be applied to skin before an application of DEET.
- | *Applicable only to African countries:* Iron all clothes that have been dried outdoors to avoid cutaneous myiasis due to the tumbu fly.

## Tuberculosis

- | Practice hand hygiene diligently.
- | As much as possible, avoid crowded public transportation or crowded public places that are poorly ventilated.
- | Move away from anyone with a persistent or intense cough.
- | Screen domestic workers for tuberculosis.
- | If planning a long stay, have a tuberculosis skin test or tuberculosis blood test before departure, once per year thereafter,

and on returning home.

## Pretravel Checklist

- | Predeparture medical and dental exams are advised.
- | Express any concerns about jet lag, altitude illness, or motion sickness to a travel health provider who may suggest suitable medications.
- | Before departure, ensure adequate supplies of any medications for the full journey and that they are securely packaged in their original containers and carried in multiple places. Travelers should have a letter from a physician, stating the medical condition and the medications and/or medical supplies being carried. Carry all medicines in labeled prescription bottles.
- | Prepare a compact medical kit that includes the following: Simple first-aid supplies, such as bandages, gauze, hemostatic gauze, antiseptic, antibiotic ointment, butterfly bandages, skin glue, and splinter forceps, a thermometer, antipyretic agents, antifungal creams, cough and cold remedies, antacids, hydrocortisone cream, and blister pads.
- | Pack a spare pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses and adequate cleansing solution, if applicable.
- | Pack sunglasses, wide-brimmed hats, sunscreen lotions, and lip protection to avoid sun exposure problems during travel.
- | Always arrange adequate medical and evacuation insurance when traveling even for short trips. Ensure all preexisting medical issues are declared to the insurer so that non-covered conditions are ascertained in advance. Have the contact details recorded and accessible at all times during travel.
- | Carry a list of contact information for hometown medical providers, health insurance carriers, and a medical assistance company, keeping it accessible at all times.
- | Carry a list of medical conditions, allergies, and medications with dosages.
- | Carry a copy of a recent electrocardiogram on a portable USB drive or make sure the electrocardiogram can be accessed on the Internet if you have cardiac disease.

## Safety

### Safety and Crime Avoidance

*Extra vigilance, as outlined below, is recommended.*

- | Use caution in tourist sites and crowded areas and on or near public transportation; avoid marginal areas of cities.
- | Be wary of any stranger who initiates conversation or physical contact in any way, no matter how accidental it may seem.
- | Be familiar with common local scams and distraction techniques.
- | Avoid using ATMs at night.
- | Minimize visible signs of wealth in dress or jewelry.
- | Wear handbags across the chest to prevent theft.
- | Give up valuables if confronted. Money and passports can be replaced; life cannot.
- | Use only registered taxis, preferably radio taxis.
- | Carry only a photocopy of the passport face page and legal entry stamp unless otherwise required by authorities; leave the actual passport in a hotel safe or other safe place.
- | Advise at least 1 other person of one's whereabouts and expected schedule.
- | Register a foreign trip and residence information with the Department of State at [travelregistration.state.gov](http://travelregistration.state.gov) (U.S. citizens only), which facilitates communication and assistance in case of an emergency.

### Safety in the Hotel

- | Keep hotel doors locked at all times.
- | Seek out and read fire safety instructions in the hotel room. Become familiar with escape routes upon arrival.
- | Keep valuables in the room safe or the hotel safe.

### Safety While Driving

- | Do not drink and drive.
- | Avoid overcrowded transportation.
- | Keep automobile doors locked and windows closed at all times, if possible.
- | Seek vehicles with seat belts, which may result in extra expense; decline vehicles without seat belts unless no choice is available.
- | Decline transportation in vehicles with worn tires, worn brakes, or inoperative lights.

- | Avoid driving at night or alone, and seek local advice before driving outside urban areas after dark.
- | Never drive a motorcycle or scooter abroad; wear a helmet if you are a passenger.
- | If planning a long stay, arrange for a locally purchased mobile phone to be in the vehicle, if possible.

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