

# Kenya

Kenya is an increasingly popular destination for Australian travellers. Below is a summary of the major health risks and recommendations for Kenya. It is intended as a guide only and is not to be used as a substitute for professional medical advice.

Recommendations on vaccinations and medications requires assessment on an individual basis taking into account factors such as your medical history, your itinerary, length of stay and style of travel. You should ideally see us **4-6 weeks** before your trip.

## Vaccines and Medications

### All travellers

- Routine vaccines** Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before every trip, such as:
- measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine
  - diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine
  - varicella (chickenpox) vaccine
  - polio vaccine
  - influenza vaccine

### Most travellers

- Hepatitis A** **Highly recommended.** You can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water in this country, regardless of where you are eating or staying.
- Typhoid** **Recommended for most travellers.** You can get typhoid through contaminated food or water, especially if you are staying with friends or relatives, visiting smaller cities or rural areas, or if you are an adventurous eater.

- Polio** All travellers to Kenya should be up to date with vaccinations against polio. This is especially important for:
- Children
  - Travellers who were vaccinated against polio as a child but have never had an additional dose as an adult. Immunity wanes after 10 years and a booster dose is recommended for adults.

- Yellow fever** **Yellow fever vaccine is compulsory** for all travellers 9 months of age or older, returning to Australia.

- Malaria** **Malaria is widespread in all areas of Kenya under 2,500m altitude**, including game parks. However, there is no malaria in the highly urbanized, central part of Nairobi.
- Your doctor may recommend medication to prevent malaria. You should take this before, during, and after your trip to prevent malaria. It is also important to continue with the medication for the recommended period upon return to Australia

## Some travellers

- Hepatitis B** You can get hepatitis B through sexual contact, contaminated needles, and blood products.
- Rabies** Rabies can be found in dogs, bats, and other mammals in this country. You should keep away from animals to avoid the risk of rabies. The vaccine is recommended for these groups:
  - Travellers involved in outdoor and other activities in remote areas that put them at risk for animal bites (such as camping, hiking, biking, adventure travel and caving).
  - People who will be working with or around animals (such as veterinarians, wildlife professionals, and researchers).
  - People who are taking long trips or moving to remote areas
  - Children, because they tend to play with animals, might not report bites, and are more likely to have animal bites on their head and neck.
- Meningitis** Kenya is part of the “meningitis belt” of sub-Saharan Africa.  
  
You should get the meningococcal vaccine if you plan to visit during the dry season when the disease is most common (**December – June**).
- Cholera and traveller’s diarrhoea** Cholera is a serious diarrhoeal disease caused by a bacteria. It is common in developing countries and is associated with poor sanitation. Your doctor may recommend an oral vaccination.

## Other health concerns

- Bilharzia** Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is a common, serious infection caused by a parasite found in rivers, streams and lakes in sub-Saharan Africa.  
  
No vaccine is available. To avoid bilharzia, you should **avoid swimming in all lakes in the Rift Valley**, even if the water appears crystal clear and inviting.
- Hookworm** Wearing enclosed footwear in undeveloped areas is important to prevent hookworm. Hookworms penetrate through intact skin such as walking with bare feet, and can cause severe gastrointestinal and skin infections.
- Parasitic infections** Parasites and helminths such as roundworm and whipworm are commonly transmitted by poor sanitary practices. You can minimize your risk of picking these up by following the health eating and drinking habits listed on page 1.
- Altitude sickness** Mount Kilimanjaro is a popular destination for Australian adventure travellers. It sits on the border of Tanzania with Kenya.  
  
**Altitude sickness needs to be considered by all climbers wishing to climb Mt Kilimanjaro.** It occurs at altitudes greater than 3000m and can be fatal. Discuss with your doctor about medications to prevent altitude sickness.

## Stay healthy and safe

Unclean food and water can cause travellers' diarrhoea and other diseases. Reduce your risk by sticking to these habits!

<p><b>Eat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food that is cooked &amp; served hot</li> <li>• Hard-cooked eggs</li> <li>• Fruits and vegetables you have washed in clean water or peeled yourself</li> <li>• Pasteurized dairy products</li> </ul>	<p><b>Don't Eat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food served at room temperature</li> <li>• Food from street vendors</li> <li>• Raw or soft-cooked (runny) eggs</li> <li>• Raw or undercooked meat or fish</li> <li>• Unwashed or unpeeled raw fruits and vegetables</li> <li>• Unpasteurized dairy products</li> <li>• "Bushmeat" (monkeys, bats, other wild game)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Drink</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottled water that is sealed</li> <li>• Water that has been disinfected</li> <li>• Ice made with bottled or disinfected water</li> <li>• Carbonated drinks</li> <li>• Hot coffee or tea</li> <li>• Pasteurized milk</li> </ul>	<p><b>Don't Drink</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tap or well water</li> <li>• Ice made with tap or well water</li> <li>• Drinks made with tap or well water (eg. reconstituted juice)</li> <li>• Unpasteurized milk</li> </ul>

## Prevent insect-related illnesses

Kenya has high rates of insect-borne diseases such as **malaria**. You should discuss malaria prevention options with your doctor.

In addition, you can reduce your risk of insect bites by taking these steps:

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
- Use a repellent that contains 20% or more DEET for protection that lasts up to several hours.
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (eg. boots, pants, socks, tents). Do not use permethrin directly on skin.
- Stay and sleep in air-conditioned or screened rooms.
- Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors.

## Things to consider packing

Your doctor may advise you to take prescription or over-the-counter drugs with you on your trip in case you get sick. These may include:

<p><b>Prescription medicines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Any medications you take regularly</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Anti-malaria medications</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mild sleeping tablets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Altitude sickness tablets</li> </ul>	<p><b>Over-the-counter medicines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Diarrhoea medicine</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Motion sickness medicine</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cough suppressants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medicine for pain and fever (eg. paracetamol, ibuprofen)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mild laxatives</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supplies to prevent illness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitiser</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Water purification tablets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bed net to prevent insect bites</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses and hat</li> </ul>
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## After your trip

Our doctors can help if you are not feeling well after your trip. Be sure to tell us about your travel, including where you went and what you did on your trip. Also tell us if you were bitten or scratched by an animal while traveling.

Malaria is always a serious disease and may be deadly. If you develop a fever either while traveling in a malaria-risk area or after you return home (for up to 6 months), you should seek immediate medical attention.