



## Travel Medicine Information for Countries in *West Africa* from [TRIPSETC.COM](http://TRIPSETC.COM)

### Vaccine and Immunization Information for Travelers to Countries in *West Africa*

<p><b>Countries include:</b> Benin Burkina Faso Cape Verde Islands</p>	<p>Cte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) The Gambia Ghana Guinea Guinea-Bissau Liberia Mali Mauritania Niger Nigeria Saint Helena São Tomé and Príncipe Senegal Sierra Leone Togo</p>
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#### *Health Information for Travelers to Countries in West Africa*

#### Recommended Vaccinations and Preventive Medications

The following vaccines may be recommended for your travel to West Africa. Discuss your travel plans and personal health with a health-care provider to determine which vaccines you will need.

- **Hepatitis A** or immune globulin (IG). Transmission of Hepatitis A virus can occur through direct person-to-person contact; through exposure to contaminated water, ice, or shellfish harvested in contaminated water; or from fruits, vegetables, or other foods that are eaten uncooked and that were contaminated during harvesting or subsequent handling.
- **Hepatitis B**, especially if you might be exposed to blood or body fluids (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, or be exposed through medical treatment. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for children ages 11–12 years who did not receive the series as infants.

- **Malaria:** your risk of Malaria may be high in all of the countries in the West Africa Region.
- **Rabies,** pre-exposure vaccination, if you might have extensive unprotected outdoor exposure in rural areas, such as might occur during camping, hiking, or bicycling, or engaging in certain occupational activities.
- **Typhoid,** Typhoid fever can be contracted through contaminated drinking water or food, or by eating food or drinking beverages that have been handled by a person who is infected. Large outbreaks are most often related to fecal contamination of water supplies or foods sold by street vendors.
- **Yellow Fever,** a viral disease that occurs primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa (*West Africa*) and Tropical South America, is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes. The virus is also present in Panama and Trinidad and Tobago. Yellow fever vaccination is recommended for travelers to endemic areas and may be required to cross certain international borders. Vaccination should be given 10 days before travel and at 10 year intervals if there is on-going risk.
- As needed, booster doses for **Tetanus-Diphtheria, Measles,** and a one-time dose of **Polio Vaccine** for adults.

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### **Diseases found in the West Africa (risk can vary by country and region within a country; quality of in-country surveillance also varies)**

The preventive measures you need to take while traveling in the West Africa depend on the areas you visit and the length of time you stay. You should observe the precautions listed in this document in most areas of this region.

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#### **Malaria:**

**Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness.** Humans get Malaria from the bite of a mosquito infected with the parasite. Prevent this serious disease by seeing your health care provider for a prescription antimalarial drug and by protecting yourself against mosquito bites.

#### **West Africa:**

Your risk of Malaria may be high in all countries in West Africa, including cities. All travelers to West Africa, including infants, children, and former residents of West Africa, may be at risk for malaria.

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#### **Yellow Fever:**

#### **West Africa:**

Your risk of Yellow Fever may be **high** in some countries in West Africa. A certificate of Yellow Fever vaccination may be **required** for entry into certain countries in West Africa.

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### **Food and Waterborne Diseases: (All Regions in Africa)**

**Make sure your food and drinking water are safe.** Food and waterborne diseases are the primary cause of illness in travelers. **Travelers' Diarrhea** can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites, which are found throughout West Africa and can contaminate food or water. Infections may cause diarrhea and vomiting (**E. Coli**,

**Salmonella, Cholera, and Parasites)**, fever (**Typhoid Fever and Toxoplasmosis**), or liver damage (**Hepatitis**).

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**Other Disease Risks:**

***West Africa:***

**Dengue, Filariasis, Leishmaniasis, and Onchocerciasis** (River Blindness) are other diseases carried by insects that also occur in this region. Endemic foci of river blindness exist in all countries listed except in the greater part of The Gambia, Mauritania. Protecting yourself against insect bites will help to prevent these diseases. The risk for contracting **African Sleeping Sickness (Trypanosomiasis)**, which is caused by the bite of an infected tsetse fly, is high in all countries except The Gambia, Niger, and Mauritania. A number of **Rickettsial Infections** also occur in this region. Wearing protective clothing and avoiding rural areas or areas of dense vegetation along streams, is the best protection. **Plague** occurs sporadically or in outbreaks. **Schistosomiasis**, a parasitic infection, can be contracted in fresh water in this region. Do not swim in fresh water (except in well-chlorinated swimming pools) in these countries. (For more information, please see Swimming and Recreational Water Precautions.) **Polio** is still endemic in Nigeria. Other infections that tend to occur more often in longer-term travelers (or immigrants from the region) include **Tuberculosis, HIV and Hepatitis B**.

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