

Health Information for Travelers to Belize

Traveler View



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Vaccines and Medicines

Check the vaccines and medicines list and visit your doctor at least a month before your trip to get vaccines or medicines you may need.

Find Out Why

Protect Yourself

All travelers

You should be up to date on routine vaccinations while traveling to any destination. Some vaccines may also be required for travel.

[Routine vaccines](#)

Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before every trip. These vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot.



Most travelers

Get travel vaccines and medicines because there is a risk of these diseases in the country you are visiting.

	Find Out Why	Protect Yourself
<u>Hepatitis A</u>	CDC recommends this vaccine because you can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water in Belize, regardless of where you are eating or staying.	
<u>Typhoid</u>	You can get typhoid through contaminated food or water in Belize. CDC recommends this vaccine for most travelers, especially if you are staying with friends or relatives, visiting smaller cities or rural areas, or if you are an adventurous eater.	

Some travelers

Ask your doctor what vaccines and medicines you need based on where you are going, how long you are staying, what you will be doing, and if you are traveling from a country other than the US.

<u>Hepatitis B</u>	You can get hepatitis B through sexual contact, contaminated needles, and blood products, so CDC recommends this vaccine if you might have sex with a new partner, get a tattoo or piercing, or have any medical procedures.	
<u>Rabies</u>	<p>Rabies can be found in dogs, bats, and other mammals in Belize, so CDC recommends this vaccine for the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travelers involved in outdoor and other activities (such as camping, hiking, biking, adventure travel, and caving) that put them at risk for animal bites. • 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 Belize • 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. 	
<u>Yellow Fever</u>	<p>There is no risk of yellow fever in Belize. The government of Belize <i>requires</i> proof of yellow fever vaccination only if you are arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever. This does not include the US. If you are traveling from a country other than the US, check this list to see if you may be required to get the yellow fever vaccine: <u>Countries with risk of yellow fever virus (YFV) transmission</u>.</p> <p>For more information on recommendations and requirements, see <u>yellow fever recommendations and requirements for Belize</u>. Your doctor can help you decide if this vaccine is right for you based on your travel plans.</p> <p>Note: Yellow fever vaccine availability in the United States is currently limited. If you need to be vaccinated before your trip, you may need to travel some distance and schedule your appointment well in advance. <u>Find the clinic nearest you</u>.</p>	

Find Out Why

Protect Yourself

Malaria

Although the risk of malaria is low in Belize, you should avoid mosquito bites to prevent malaria. Some travelers to certain areas who are at higher risk for complications from malaria (such as pregnant women) may need to take extra precautions, like antimalarial medicine. Talk to your doctor about how you can prevent malaria while traveling. For more information on malaria in Belize, see [malaria in Belize](#).



Key

-  Get vaccinated
-  Take antimalarial meds
-  Eat and drink safely
-  Prevent bug bites
-  Keep away from animals
-  Reduce your exposure to germs
-  Avoid sharing body fluids
-  Avoid non-sterile medical or cosmetic equipment

Note: Zika is a risk in Belize. Zika infection during pregnancy can cause serious birth defects. Therefore, pregnant women should not travel to Belize. Partners of pregnant women and couples planning pregnancy should know the [possible risks to pregnancy and take preventive steps \(more information\)](#).

Stay Healthy and Safe

Learn actions you can take to stay healthy and safe on your trip. Vaccines cannot protect you from many diseases in Belize, so your behaviors are important.

Eat and drink safely

Unclean food and water can cause travelers' diarrhea and other diseases. Reduce your risk by sticking to safe food and water habits.

Eat

- Food that is cooked and served hot
- Hard-cooked eggs
- Fruits and vegetables you have washed in clean water or peeled yourself
- Pasteurized dairy products

Don't Eat

- Food served at room temperature
- Food from street vendors
- Raw or soft-cooked (runny) eggs
- Raw or undercooked (rare) meat or fish

- Unwashed or unpeeled raw fruits and vegetables
- Unpasteurized dairy products
- "Bushmeat" (monkeys, bats, or other wild game)

Drink

- Bottled water that is sealed
- Water that has been disinfected
- Ice made with bottled or disinfected water
- Carbonated drinks
- Hot coffee or tea
- Pasteurized milk

Don't Drink

- Tap or well water
- Ice made with tap or well water
- Drinks made with tap or well water (such as reconstituted juice)
- Unpasteurized milk

Take Medicine

Talk with your doctor about taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs with you on your trip in case you get sick.

Prevent bug bites

Bugs (like mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas) can spread a number of diseases in Belize. Many of these diseases cannot be prevented with a vaccine or medicine. You can reduce your risk by taking steps to prevent bug bites.

What can I do to prevent bug bites?

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
- Use an appropriate insect repellent (see below).
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and 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.

What type of insect repellent should I use?

- **FOR PROTECTION AGAINST TICKS AND MOSQUITOES:** Use a repellent that contains 20% or more **DEET** for protection that lasts up to several hours.
- **FOR PROTECTION AGAINST MOSQUITOES ONLY:** Products with one of the following active ingredients can also help prevent mosquito bites. Higher percentages of active ingredient provide longer protection.
 - **DEET**
 - **Picaridin** (also known as KBR 3023, Bayrepel, and icaridin)
 - **Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or PMD**
 - **IR3535**
- Always use insect repellent as directed.

What should I do if I am bitten by bugs?

- Avoid scratching bug bites, and apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to reduce the itching.
- Check your entire body for ticks after outdoor activity. Be sure to [remove ticks](#) properly.

What can I do to avoid bed bugs?

Although bed bugs do not carry disease, they are an annoyance. See our [information page about avoiding bug bites](#) for some easy tips to avoid them. For more information on bed bugs, see [Bed Bugs](#).

For more detailed information on avoiding bug bites, see [Avoid Bug Bites](#).

Note: Zika is a risk in Belize. For more information, see [Zika Virus in Belize](#).

Stay safe outdoors

If your travel plans in Belize include outdoor activities, take these steps to stay safe and healthy during your trip.

- Stay alert to changing weather conditions and adjust your plans if conditions become unsafe.
- Prepare for activities by wearing the right clothes and packing protective items, such as bug spray, sunscreen, and a basic first aid kit.
- Consider learning basic first aid and CPR before travel. Bring a [travel health kit](#) with items appropriate for your activities.
- Heat-related illness, such as heat stroke, can be deadly. Eat and drink regularly, wear loose and lightweight clothing, and limit physical activity during high temperatures.
- If you are outside for many hours in heat, eat salty snacks and drink water to stay hydrated and replace salt lost through sweating.
- **Protect yourself from UV radiation:** use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15, wear protective clothing, and seek shade during the hottest time of day (10 a.m.–4 p.m.).
- Be especially careful during summer months and at high elevation. Because sunlight reflects off snow, sand, and water, sun exposure may be increased during activities like skiing, swimming, and sailing.
- Very cold temperatures can be dangerous. Dress in layers and cover heads, hands, and feet properly if you are visiting a cold location.

Stay safe around water

- Swim only in designated swimming areas. Obey lifeguards and warning flags on beaches.
- Practice safe boating—follow all boating safety laws, do not drink alcohol if driving a boat, and always wear a life jacket.
- Do not dive into shallow water.
- Do not swim in freshwater in developing areas or where sanitation is poor.
- Avoid swallowing water when swimming. Untreated water can carry germs that make you sick.
- To prevent infections, wear shoes on beaches where there may be animal waste.

Leptospirosis, a bacterial infection that can be spread in fresh water, is found in Belize. Avoid swimming in fresh, unchlorinated water, such as lakes, ponds, or rivers.

Keep away from animals

Most animals avoid people, but they may attack if they feel threatened, are protecting their young or territory, or if they are injured or ill. Animal bites and scratches can lead to serious diseases such as rabies.

Follow these tips to protect yourself:

- Do not touch or feed *any* animals you do not know.
- Do not allow animals to lick open wounds, and do not get animal saliva in your eyes or mouth.
- Avoid rodents and their urine and feces.
- Traveling pets should be supervised closely and not allowed to come in contact with local animals.
- If you wake in a room with a bat, seek medical care immediately. Bat bites may be hard to see.

All animals can pose a threat, but be extra careful around dogs, bats, monkeys, sea animals such as jellyfish, and snakes. If you are bitten or scratched by an animal, immediately:

- **Wash** the wound with soap and clean water.
- **Go** to a doctor right away.
- **Tell** your doctor about your injury when you get back to the United States.

Consider buying medical evacuation insurance. Rabies is a deadly disease that must be treated quickly, and treatment may not be available in some countries.

Reduce your exposure to germs

Follow these tips to avoid getting sick or spreading illness to others while traveling:

- Wash your hands often, especially before eating.
- If soap and water aren't available, clean hands with hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol).
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. If you need to touch your face, make sure your hands are clean.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Try to avoid contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, stay home or in your hotel room, unless you need medical care.

Avoid sharing body fluids

Diseases can be spread through body fluids, such as saliva, blood, vomit, and semen.

Protect yourself:

- Use latex condoms correctly.
- Do not inject drugs.
- Limit alcohol consumption. People take more risks when intoxicated.
- Do not share needles or any devices that can break the skin. That includes needles for tattoos, piercings, and acupuncture.
- If you receive medical or dental care, make sure the equipment is disinfected or sanitized.

Know how to get medical care while traveling

Plan for how you will get health care during your trip, should the need arise:

- Carry a list of [local doctors and hospitals](#) at your destination.
- Review your health insurance plan to determine what medical services it would cover during your trip. Consider purchasing travel health and medical evacuation insurance.
- Carry a card that identifies, in the local language, your blood type, chronic conditions or serious allergies, and the generic names of any medications you take.
- Some prescription drugs may be illegal in other countries. Call [Belize's embassy](#) to verify that all of your prescription(s) are legal to bring with you.
- Bring all the medicines (including over-the-counter medicines) you think you might need during your trip, including extra in case of travel delays. Ask your doctor to help you get prescriptions filled early if you need to.

Many foreign hospitals and clinics are accredited by the Joint Commission International. A list of accredited facilities is available at their website (www.jointcommissioninternational.org).

In some countries, medicine (prescription and over-the-counter) may be substandard or counterfeit. Bring the medicines you will need from the United States to avoid having to buy them at your destination.

Malaria is a risk in some parts of Belize. If you are going to a risk area, fill your malaria prescription before you leave, and take enough with you for the entire length of your trip. Follow your doctor's instructions for taking the pills; some need to be started before you leave.

Select safe transportation

Motor vehicle crashes are the #1 killer of healthy US citizens in foreign countries.

In many places cars, buses, large trucks, rickshaws, bikes, people on foot, and even animals share the same lanes of traffic, increasing the risk for crashes.

Walking

Be smart when you are traveling on foot.

- Use sidewalks and marked crosswalks.
- Pay attention to the traffic around you, especially in crowded areas.
- Remember, people on foot do not always have the right of way in other countries.

Riding/Driving

Choose a safe vehicle.

- Choose official taxis or public transportation, such as trains and buses.
- Ride only in cars that have seatbelts.
- Avoid overcrowded, overloaded, top-heavy buses and minivans.
- Avoid riding on motorcycles or motorbikes, especially motorbike taxis. (Many crashes are caused by inexperienced motorbike drivers.)
- Choose newer vehicles—they may have more safety features, such as airbags, and be more reliable.
- Choose larger vehicles, which may provide more protection in crashes.

Think about the driver.

- Do not drive after drinking alcohol or ride with someone who has been drinking.
- Consider hiring a licensed, trained driver familiar with the area.
- Arrange payment before departing.

Follow basic safety tips.

- Wear a seatbelt at all times.
- Sit in the back seat of cars and taxis.
- When on motorbikes or bicycles, always wear a helmet. (Bring a helmet from home, if needed.)
- Avoid driving at night; street lighting in certain parts of Belize may be poor.
- Do not use a cell phone or text while driving (illegal in many countries).
- Travel during daylight hours only, especially in rural areas.
- If you choose to drive a vehicle in Belize, learn the local traffic laws and have the proper paperwork.
- Get any driving permits and insurance you may need. Get an International Driving Permit (IDP). Carry the IDP and a US-issued driver's license at all times.
- Check with your auto insurance policy's international coverage, and get more coverage if needed. Make sure you have liability insurance.

Flying

- Avoid using local, unscheduled aircraft.
- If possible, fly on larger planes (more than 30 seats); larger airplanes are more likely to have regular safety inspections.
- Try to schedule flights during daylight hours and in good weather.

Medical Evacuation Insurance

If you are seriously injured, emergency care may not be available or may not meet US standards. Trauma care centers are uncommon outside urban areas. Having [medical evacuation insurance](#) can be helpful for these reasons.

Maintain personal security

Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home, and always stay alert and aware of your surroundings.

Before you leave

- Research your destination(s), including local laws, customs, and culture.
- Monitor travel [warnings and alerts](#) and read travel [tips](#) from the US Department of State.

- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#).
- Leave a copy of your itinerary, contact information, credit cards, and passport with someone at home.
- Pack as light as possible, and leave at home any item you could not replace.

While at your destination(s)

- Carry contact information for the nearest [US embassy or consulate](#).
- Carry a photocopy of your passport and entry stamp; leave the actual passport securely in your hotel.
- Follow all local laws and social customs.
- Do not wear expensive clothing or jewelry.
- Always keep hotel doors locked, and store valuables in secure areas.
- If possible, choose hotel rooms between the 2nd and 6th floors.

Healthy Travel Packing List

Use the [Healthy Travel Packing List for Belize](#) for a list of health-related items to consider packing for your trip. Talk to your doctor about which items are most important for you.

Why does CDC recommend packing these health-related items?

It's best to be prepared to prevent and treat common illnesses and injuries. Some supplies and medicines may be difficult to find at your destination, may have different names, or may have different ingredients than what you normally use.

Travel Health Notices

Be aware of current health issues in Belize. Learn how to protect yourself.

Alert Level 2, Practice Enhanced Precautions

- [Zika Virus in Belize](#) August 07, 2018 Zika virus (or Zika) has been reported. Public health officials have reported that mosquitoes are infected with Zika and spreading it to people.

After Your Trip

If you are not feeling well after your trip, you may need to see a doctor. If you need help finding a travel medicine specialist, see [Find a Clinic](#). Be sure to tell your doctor about your travel, including where you went and what you did on your trip. Also tell your doctor if you were bitten or scratched by an animal while traveling.

If your doctor prescribed antimalarial medicine for your trip, keep taking the rest of your pills after you return home. If you stop taking your medicine too soon, you could still get sick.

Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness. If you become ill with a fever either while traveling in a malaria-risk area or after you return home (for up to 1 year), you should seek **immediate** medical attention and should tell the doctor about your travel history.

For more information on what to do if you are sick after your trip, see [Getting Sick after Travel](#).

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- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
[National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases \(NCEZID\)](#)
[Division of Global Migration and Quarantine \(DGMQ\)](#)

Health Information for Travelers to Belize

Healthy Travel Packing List

Pack items for your health and safety.

- You may not be able to purchase and pack all of these items, and some may not be relevant to you and your travel plans. Talk to your doctor about which items are most important for you.
- This list is general and may not include all the items you need. Check our [Traveler Information Center](#) for more information if you are a traveler with specific health needs, such as travelers who are pregnant, immune compromised, or traveling for a specific purpose like humanitarian aid work.
- Remember to pack extras of important health supplies in case of travel delays.

Prescription medicines

- **Your prescriptions**
- [Travelers' diarrhea](#) antibiotic
- **Suture/syringe kit**
Kit is for use by local health care provider & requires a letter from your doctor on letterhead stationery
- **Altitude sickness medicine**
- **Medicine to prevent malaria**

Medical supplies

- **Glasses**
Consider packing spare glasses in case yours are damaged
- **Contact lenses**
Consider packing spare contacts in case yours are damaged
- **Needles or syringes (for diabetes, for example)**
Requires a letter from your doctor on letterhead stationery
- **Suture kit**
Kit is for use by local health care provider & requires a letter from your doctor on letterhead stationery
- **Diabetes testing supplies**
- **Insulin**
- **Inhalers**

- **Epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPens)**
- **Medical alert bracelet or necklace**

Over-the-counter medicines

- **Antacid**
- **[Diarrhea medicine](#)**
Examples: loperamide [Imodium] or bismuth subsalicylate [Pepto-Bismol]
- **Antihistamine**
- **Motion sickness medicine**
- **Cough drops**
- **Cough suppression/expectorant**
- **Decongestant**
- **Medicine for pain and fever**
Examples: acetaminophen, aspirin, or ibuprofen
- **Mild laxative**
- **Mild sedative or other sleep aid**
- **Saline nose spray**

Supplies to prevent illness or injury

- **Hand sanitizer or wipes**
Alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol or antibacterial hand wipes
- **Water purification tablets**
See CDC recommendations: [Water Disinfection](#).
- **Water purification tablets**
May be needed if camping or visiting remote areas
- **Insect repellent**
Select an insect repellent based on CDC recommendations: [Avoid Bug Bites](#)
- **Permethrin**
Permethrin is insect repellent for clothing. It may be needed if you spend a lot of time outdoors. Clothing can also be treated at home in advance.
- **Bed net**
For protection against insect bites while sleeping
- **Sunscreen**
(SPF 15 or greater) with UVA and UVB protection. See [Sun Exposure](#).

- **Sunglasses and hat**

Wear for additional sun protection. A wide brim hat is preferred.

- **Personal safety equipment**

Examples: child safety seats, bicycle helmets

- **Earplugs**

First-aid kit

- **1% hydrocortisone cream**

- **Antifungal ointments**

- **Antibacterial ointments**

- **Antiseptic wound cleanser**

- **Aloe gel**

For sunburns

- **Insect bite treatment**

Anti-itch gel or cream

- **Bandages**

Multiple sizes, gauze, and adhesive tape

- **Moleskin or molefoam for blisters**

- **Elastic/compression bandage wrap**

For sprains and strains

- **Disposable gloves**

- **Digital thermometer**

- **Scissors and safety pins**

- **Cotton swabs (Q-Tips)**

- **Tweezers**

- **Eye drops**

- **Oral rehydration salts**

Documents

- **Health insurance documents**

Health insurance card (your regular plan and/or supplemental travel health insurance plan) and copies of claim forms

- **Proof of yellow fever vaccination**

If required for your trip, take your completed International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis card or medical waiver

- **Copies of all prescriptions**

Make sure prescriptions include generic names. Bring prescriptions for medicines, eye glasses/contacts, and other medical supplies.

- **Contact card**

Carry a contact card containing the street addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of the following:

- Family member or close contact remaining in the United States
- Health care provider(s) at home
- Lodging at your destination
- Hospitals or clinics (including emergency services) in your destination
- US embassy or consulate in the destination country or countries