

Stay Healthy and Minimize Illness During Your Travels in Thailand

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Prevent Insect Bites

Many diseases, like malaria and dengue are spread through insect bites. If you are in a tropical or sub-tropical area of Thailand, you may want to:

- Use insect repellent (bug spray) with 30%-50% DEET. Picaridin, available in 7% and 15% concentrations, needs more frequent application. There is less information available on how effective picaridin is at protecting against all of the types of mosquitoes that transmit malaria.
 - Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat outdoors.
 - Remain indoors in a screened or air-conditioned area during the peak biting period for malaria (dusk and dawn).
 - Sleep in beds covered by nets treated with permethrin, if not sleep in an air-conditioned or well-screened room.
- Spray rooms with products effective against flying insects, such as those containing pyrethroid.



Be Careful about Food and Water

Diseases from food and water are the leading cause of illness in travelers. Follow these tips for safe eating and drinking:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.
- Be careful if you eat food purchased from street vendors, and make sure all glasses and plates are completely dry before using.
- Make sure food is fully cooked.
- Avoid unmarked dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.

Diseases from food and water often cause vomiting and diarrhea.

Avoid Injuries

Motorbike and car crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers in Thailand. Protect yourself from these injuries by:

- Not drinking and driving.
- Wearing your seat belt.
- Following local traffic laws.
- Wearing helmets when you ride bikes, motorcycles, and motor bikes.
- Not getting on an overloaded bus or mini-bus.
- Hiring a local driver, when possible.
- Avoiding night driving.

Other Health Tips

- To avoid animal bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague) do not handle or pet animals, especially dogs and cats. If you are bitten or scratched, wash the wound immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention to determine if mediation or anti-rabies vaccine is needed.
- To avoid infections such as HIV and viral hepatitis do not share needles for tattoos, body piercing, or injections.
- To reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases always use latex condoms.

To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot, especially on beaches where animals may have defecated.