

VITAL REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUR SAFE TRIP TO GHANA

Visas and other Entry Requirements

All visitors to Ghana are required to have a visa unless you are a citizen of a West African country which belongs to [ECOWAS](#). You must have a return ticket to Ghana before applying for a visa. Basic tourist visas are valid for 3 months from *date of issue* so don't get it too early or it may expire before you arrive. A single entry tourist visa costs \$50. Student visa applications must be submitted together with a letter of invitation from the principals in Ghana and or in the student's home country.

Ghana also requires all visitors to have a valid certificate of immunization against [Yellow Fever](#). Check with [Embassy of Ghana](#) for the most updated information and location of Consular offices.

Ghana is a tropical country and a poor country so you'll need to pack a good [basic medical kit](#) for yourself when you go.

Other recommended immunizations for travel to Ghana include:

- Typhoid
- Hepatitis A
- Diphtheria

What Is [Yellow Fever](#)?

Yellow fever is a mosquito-borne viral disease common in sub-Saharan Africa. Illness ranges in severity from an influenza-like syndrome to severe hepatitis and hemorrhagic fever. Although it is quite rare for travelers to get yellow fever most countries have regulations and requirements for yellow fever vaccination that must be met prior to entering the country.

How Can I Get [Yellow Fever](#)?

Yellow fever is a mosquito-borne disease so you can get infected through a mosquito bite. It is most common at the end of the rainy season in West and Central Africa (July - October).



How Can I Avoid It?

If you are traveling in an area where yellow fever is endemic (see map) you should get the [vaccination](#) and also avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes. Wear long sleeves and long pants, use an insect repellent containing DEET, sleep under a mosquito net at night and try and stay in rooms with air-conditioning or a fan. Burning a mosquito coil at night is also very effective at keeping the mosquitoes away.

Symptoms of Yellow Fever:

In mild cases the symptoms are similar to influenza, but serious cases develop a high fever and may lead to internal bleeding, kidney failure and meningitis. A classic feature of yellow fever is hepatitis, which is the reason for the yellow coloring of the skin (jaundice) and the name of the disease.

Treatment of Yellow Fever:

There is no effective treatment against the yellow fever virus. The initial flue-like symptoms can be treated with acetaminophen. Serious cases will always have to be hospitalized. The mortality rate for yellow fever ranges from 5 to 40 percent. Best get that vaccine if you are able to.

Yellow Fever Vaccine

Yellow fever vaccine is a live-virus vaccine which has been used for several decades. A single dose protects against disease for 10 years or more. If a person is at continued risk of infection, a booster dose is recommended every 10 years.

Yellow Fever Vaccine Recommendations

Yellow fever vaccine is recommended for persons aged ≥ 9 months that are traveling to or living in areas at risk for yellow fever virus transmission in [South America](#) and [Africa](#). Yellow fever vaccine may be required for entry into certain countries. Yellow fever vaccination requirements and recommendations for specific countries are available on the [CDC Travelers' Health page](#).

Serious adverse events can occur following yellow fever vaccination. Therefore, persons should only be vaccinated if they are at risk of exposure to yellow fever virus or require proof of vaccination for country entry. To minimize the risk of serious adverse events, health-care providers should carefully observe the contraindications and consider the precautions about vaccination prior to vaccine administration. Individuals considering yellow fever vaccination should discuss their underlying health conditions with their health care provider. A medical waiver can be given for persons with a precaution about or contraindication to vaccination. More information about medical waivers is available on the [CDC Travelers' Health website](#).

To minimize the risk of serious adverse events, health-care providers should carefully observe the contraindications and consider the precautions about vaccination prior to vaccine administration.

For more information about the use of yellow fever vaccine in travelers or laboratory workers, see the [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice \(ACIP\) recommendations](#).

This vaccine is administered only at designated vaccination centers. Locations of centers are available from your local health department. Information regarding registered yellow fever vaccination sites can be viewed at the [CDC Travelers' Health Yellow Fever website](#). For health-care professionals who want to learn more about yellow fever disease and vaccine, a [continuing education module](#) is available.

Contraindications (conditions in which vaccine should not be given)

- Allergy to vaccine component
- Age <6 months
- Symptomatic HIV infection or CD4+ T-lymphocytes <200/mm³ (<15% of total in children aged <6 years)
- Thymus disorder associated with abnormal immune function
- Primary immune deficiencies
- Malignant neoplasm
- Transplantation
- Immunosuppressive and immune modulatory therapies

Precautions (conditions for which the risks of the vaccine and the disease should be carefully considered)

- Age 6 to 8 months
- Age ≥60 years
- Asymptomatic HIV infection and CD4+ T-lymphocytes 200 to 499/mm³ (15-24% of total in children aged <6 years)
- Pregnancy
- Breastfeeding

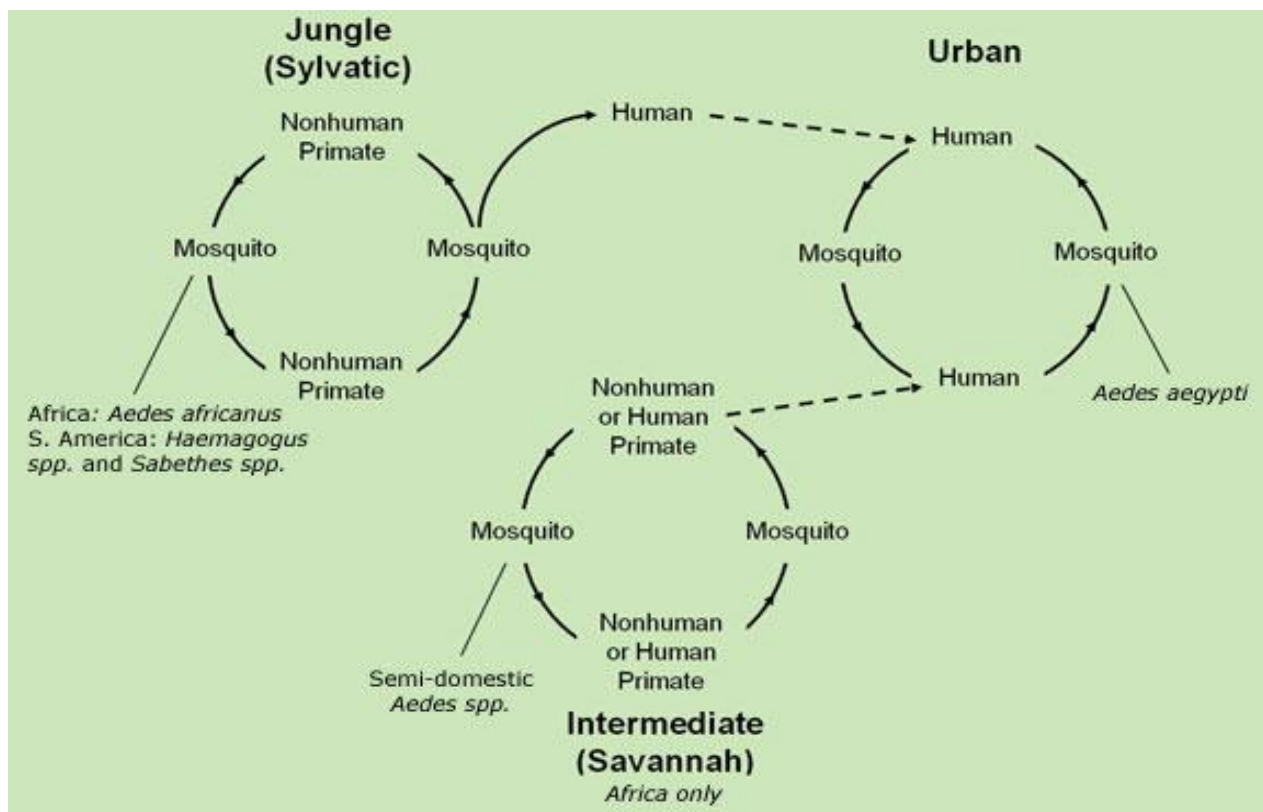
Transmission of Yellow Fever Virus

Yellow fever virus is an RNA virus that belongs to the genus *Flavivirus*. It is related to West Nile, St. Louis encephalitis, and Japanese encephalitis viruses. Yellow fever virus is transmitted to humans primarily through the bite of infected *Aedes* or *Haemagogus* species mosquitoes. Mosquitoes acquire the virus by feeding on infected primates (human or non-human) and then can transmit the virus to other primates

(human or non-human). Humans infected with yellow fever virus are infectious to mosquitoes shortly before the onset of fever and for 3–5 days after onset.

Yellow fever virus has three transmission cycles: jungle (sylvatic), intermediate (savannah), and urban.

- The jungle (sylvatic) cycle involves transmission of the virus between nonhuman primates (e.g., monkeys) and mosquito species found in the forest canopy. The virus is transmitted by mosquitoes from monkeys to humans when humans are visiting or working in the jungle.
- In Africa, an intermediate (savannah) cycle exists that involves transmission of virus from mosquitoes to humans living or working in jungle border areas. In this cycle, the virus can be transmitted from monkey to human or from human to human via mosquitoes.
- The urban cycle involves transmission of the virus between humans and urban mosquitoes, primarily *Aedes aegypti*. The virus is usually brought to the urban setting by a viremic human who was infected in the jungle or savannah.



What is Malaria Fever?

Malaria, spread by the *Anopheles* mosquito, kills millions of people in tropical and sub-tropical Africa every year. As a visitor to these areas you are also at risk of getting this disease. With the right precautions you can minimize your chances of getting malaria.



Try and Avoid This.

There's a risk of catching malaria pretty much everywhere you travel in Ghana. Ghana is home to the chloroquine-resistant strain of malaria as well as several others. Make sure your doctor or travel clinic knows you are traveling to Ghana (don't just say Africa) so he/ she can prescribe the right anti-malarial medication for you.

Safety

In general, Ghanaians are extremely friendly and you will be humbled by their hospitality. It's also one of Africa's more stable countries politically and you should be able to travel safely to all areas. But, there is real poverty and you will still attract your fair share of souvenir hawkers and beggars. If you follow some [basic safety rules](#), you shouldn't have any problems. Accra is actually one of West Africa's safest big cities but you do need to be aware of pickpockets and petty thieves especially around crowded areas like bus stops and markets. It's also not a good idea to walk on the beach alone at night.

Ghana is generally considered to be the best West African country to visit even if you're a woman traveling alone.

Here's How:

There are very few countries in Africa that are malaria-free, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The US Center for Disease Control keeps a current map of the malaria risk areas,

Commonly prescribed malaria prophylactics and treatments include:

- Mefloquine
- Malarone
- Doxycycline
- Fansidar
- Primaquine (sometimes post-travel)

Visit a travel clinic in your home country for more detail on [Treatment](#) and [Prevention](#) and start taking your malaria pills before you depart as instructed by your doctor - usually 1 week (sometimes longer). Make sure you take them exactly on schedule without missing doses. Children under 12 and women who are pregnant should consult their doctors before taking *any* anti-malarial medications.

Common side effects include photosensitivity when taking doxycycline and neuropsychiatric side effects when taking mefloquine.

Check with your doctor if you have any concerns or questions about this.

Obviously the best way to avoid malaria is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes. The following tips will help you do just that. It's difficult to avoid every *single* bite and still enjoy your safari or time at the beach, so take malaria prophylactics as well.

Tips for avoiding mosquito bites:

1. Use a mosquito net at night, the most effective are those treated with an insect repellent. Bring one with you, they are very light and will easily fit in your luggage alternatively, Spray your room before you go to sleep with insect repellent. A brand called *Doom/ Saso* is widely available and very effective in Ghana. Mosquito coils are also highly effective and burn for up to eight hours. Place the coil under your bed and try not to step on it if you get up in the middle of the night - it hurts!
2. Stay in rooms with screens on the windows, fans and/or air conditioning precisely.
3. Switch off all lights while you are sleeping since mosquitoes are attracted to light.
4. Avoid wearing strong perfume after-shave or the smell will attract mosquitoes.
5. Wear long pants and long-sleeved clothing especially around dawn and dusk when the *anopheles* mosquitoes are most active.

Tips:

1. It is very important to treat malaria as soon as symptoms arise. Symptoms include chills, fevers, headache, nausea and vomiting. Even if you have the treatment for malaria with you see [NMH Projects physician assistant: Miss. Kombeaku Jatuat Yenumaah](#) as soon as possible so a correct diagnosis can be made.
2. Ant malarial drugs do not prevent you from getting malaria, but they kill the parasites at an early stage of development. This means your bout of malaria will be a lot less severe than if you had never taken pills to begin with.
3. Contrary to many peoples' beliefs, once you get malaria you will not necessarily have recurring episodes of the disease. Malaria is curable as long as you seek treatment as the symptoms occur.

4. A malaria vaccine has not come on the market as yet, although clinical trials are being carried out.
5. Trust the local doctors especially **Miss. Kombeaku Jatuat Yenumaah**. She is familiar with the strains of malaria in the area and how to treat the disease effectively.

What You Need

- Anti-malarial drugs
- Insect repellent with DEET
- Mosquito net
- Long-sleeved clothing and trousers

Money Matters

The *cedi* is the unit of currency in Ghana. The cedi is broken down into 100 *pesewas*. Check out for a [currency converter](#) to find out how many Cedis your dollar, yen or pound can get.

The best currencies to bring to Ghana are: US Dollars, Euros or British pounds. These will get you the best exchange rate at banks and foreign exchange bureaus. ATM machines are available in major cities but may not always work and only accept Visa or MasterCard. If you're planning on bringing traveler's cheque, exchange them in the main cities, smaller towns may not exchange them. Don't change too much money at one time unless you're prepared to accommodate large wads of Ghanaian Cedis.

Banking hours are 8.30am - 4.00pm, Monday - Friday.

Note: Tipping is commonplace in Ghana; the word for tip is *dash*.

Climate and When to Go

Ghana is basically hot and humid all year round. The best time to travel is probably December to April since you'll miss the rainy season. But this is also the hottest time of year and quite uncomfortable in the north of the country since it there's the added bonus of Saharan sand blowing in the air. July and August are good months to travel if you're planning to stay in the south, since there's a lull in the rains during this time.

Find out more about [Ghana's climate and average temperatures](#)

If you wish to see [festivals](#), August and September are good months to visit Ghana since many communities celebrate their first harvests during these months yet NMH Projects have more for you in Ghana.

Reference: <http://goafrica.about.com>