

## MEDEX Medical Intelligence Report : Vietnam Local Health Care

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Quality of Care

Medical care in Vietnam is below international standards but is rapidly improving. Hygienic standards are low and hospitals are overcrowded and frequently lack medicines and basic supplies. The French-Vietnamese Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City and the French Hanoi Hospital in Hanoi as well as a few private outpatient clinics in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City can provide good quality primary and secondary care and can adequately treat trauma cases, but MEDEX may recommend evacuation in cases of complex medical conditions or emergencies requiring invasive cardiology or neurosurgical procedures.

<b>Overall Medical Risk</b>		<b>4</b>
Disease Risks		<b>4</b>
Quality Of Care Risks		<b>4</b>
Remoteness Risks		<b>3</b>
Cultural Challenge Risks		<b>4</b>

[ what is a Medical Risk Rating? ]

#### Language Proficiency

Doctors in private hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi may speak English, as well as French. Health care workers outside Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City may speak little or no English.

#### Diseases and Health Risks

Travel to Vietnam carries significant health risks for foreign visitors, including malaria and dengue fever, though taking measures to prevent insect bites and observing precautions with food and water should help travelers avoid most health risks. All water sources outside major hotels should be considered potentially contaminated. Food served in large hotels and well-known restaurants should be safe, but travelers are advised to follow all precautions related to consuming food and water.

#### Immunizations and Preventative Treatments

The following vaccinations are **recommended** for travel to Vietnam:

- Hepatitis A (all travelers)
- Hepatitis B (expatriates or long-term visitors who may have intimate contact with local residents)
- Japanese encephalitis (expatriates or long-term visitors)
- Typhoid (travelers who may eat or drink outside major hotels or restaurants)
- Rabies (travelers who may have direct contact with animals)
- Influenza (all travelers during the flu season, which runs year-round)

Anti-malaria medication is **recommended** for travelers visiting all rural areas, except for the Red River delta and the coastal plain north of the Nha Trang.

Yellow fever vaccination is **required** for travel to Vietnam for all visitors over one year of age arriving from an endemic zone.

In addition, routine immunizations for the following should be current:

- Measles-Mumps-Rubella
- Tetanus-Diphtheria
- Polio
- Varicella (Chickenpox)

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## Disease & Health Risks : Traveler's Diarrhea

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Traveler's diarrhea is the most common travel-related ailment. People acquire traveler's diarrhea by eating food or drinking water that contains microbes (germs).

There are many causes of traveler's diarrhea. The most common cause is bacteria (such as salmonella, shigella, and campylobacter), but parasites (such as giardia and cyclospora) and viruses can also cause the illness.

Traveler's diarrhea is rarely life-threatening for adults. It is more serious in children as it can frequently lead to dehydration. One can decrease the risk of developing traveler's diarrhea by avoiding water and food that may be contaminated.

Related information pertaining to Vietnam

### PREVALENCE

Traveler's diarrhea is the most common travel-related ailment. Risk for travelers in Vietnam is moderate to high. The best means of prevention is to follow all precautions related to consuming food and water.

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## Disease & Health Risks : Malaria

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Malaria is a major disease hazard for travelers to warm climates, particularly the regions of sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and Central and South America. It is transmitted from human to human by the bite of *Anopheles* mosquitoes, which can carry the malaria organism in their saliva. Although it can be a very serious and fatal disease, and remains one of the major causes of morbidity and mortality in many developing countries, strategies exist for both prevention and treatment.

The estimated risk for a traveler's acquiring malaria differs substantially from area to area. Click here to open the WHO map of endemic countries. It is very important for travelers to know the countries and areas they will be visiting, as well as the conditions they are traveling in, in order to obtain appropriate preventive

support for malaria.

Malaria can be treated effectively early in the course of the disease but delay of appropriate therapy can have serious or even fatal consequences. Travelers who have symptoms suggesting malaria should seek prompt medical evaluation as soon as possible.

There is currently no vaccine for malaria, but travelers who take preventative medication as well as measures to prevent mosquito bites greatly improve their chances of avoiding this disease.

## RELATED INFORMATION PERTAINING TO VIETNAM

### PREVALENCE

Malaria risk exists throughout Vietnam except urban areas, the Red River delta, and the coastal plains of Central Vietnam. The risk is highest in the three central highlands provinces of Dak Lak, Gia Lai and Kon Tum, as well as the southern provinces of Ca Mau, Bac Lieu and Tay Ninh. The risk of malaria in urban areas is low.

### TIME OF YEAR

Malaria risk exists throughout the year in Vietnam.

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## Disease & Health Risks : Dengue Fever

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Dengue Fever

Dengue Fever is a mosquito-borne infection which has recently become a major international public health concern. Dengue Fever affects great numbers of people; although the percentage of hemorrhagic complications and death are low, the numbers are still significant due to the high incidence of the disease.

Dengue Fever is found in tropical and sub-tropical regions around the world, predominantly in urban and semi-urban areas. The incidence of Dengue Fever has greatly increased in recent years, and it is now prevalent in the Caribbean, Central and South America, Mexico, the Pacific Islands, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Worldwide, more than 100 million cases of dengue fever occur every year. A very small percentage of these develop Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever.

#### Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever

Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever is a rare but severe, potentially fatal infection that occurs when someone with immunity to one type of Dengue virus is infected by a different type. The early symptoms of Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever are similar to those of Dengue Fever, but the disease could progress to cause bleeding, shock, and ultimately death. A very small number may go into shock and half of untreated patients who go into shock do not survive.

**Mosquito bite prevention** is the key to avoiding both Dengue Fever and Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever. There is neither a vaccine nor any specific treatment. Related information pertaining to Vietnam

### PREVALENCE

Risk of dengue fever is high in most urban areas of Vietnam.

### TIME OF YEAR

Risk occurs year-round but is highest from May through November.

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## Disease & Health Risks : Japanese Encephalitis

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Japanese encephalitis is a mosquito-borne viral infection that occurs in the summer and fall in the temperate and rural regions of China, Japan, and Korea. It is an emerging disease that has now expanded to India, Pakistan and northern Australia. In other places, disease patterns vary with rainy seasons and irrigation practices.

Most infections produce no symptoms, but when Japanese encephalitis develops it can be fatal. Half of the people who survive experience neurological complications.

There is no specific treatment for Japanese encephalitis.

Vaccination should be considered by travelers who plan to live in areas where the virus is endemic or epidemic and by travelers whose activities include trips into rural farming areas.

Short-term travelers, especially those whose visits are restricted to major urban areas, are at very low risk for infection and generally are not advised to receive the vaccine.

### RELATED INFORMATION PERTAINING TO VIETNAM

#### PREVALENCE

Risk of Japanese Encephalitis is highest in rural areas of Vietnam.

#### TIME OF YEAR

Risk is highest from May to October.

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## Disease & Health Risks : Typhoid and Para-Typhoid Fevers

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Typhoid fever is a life-threatening illness. The disease should really be called "enteric fever" since other bacteria are now emerging as the cause. Salmonella Typhi is the bacterium that gave this disease the initial name. Salmonella paratyphi A now causes up to 50% of enteric fever cases in India and China. This may well be true in other developing countries. Although typhoid (enteric) fever is common in developing countries, less than 400 cases are reported in the U.S. each year, most brought in from abroad.

The bacterium that causes typhoid (and paratyphoid) fever lives only in humans. People with typhoid fever carry it in their bloodstream and intestinal tract. A small number of people, called carriers, recover from typhoid fever but continue to carry the bacteria. Both those who are sick and carriers shed the bacteria in their feces (stool).

Typhoid fever can be contracted by travelers who eat food or drink beverages that have been handled by a person who is shedding the bacteria or if sewage contaminated with it gets into the water used for drinking or washing food.

Once the bacteria are consumed, they multiply and spread into the bloodstream. The body reacts with fever

and other signs and symptoms.

Typhoid fever can be prevented and can usually be treated with antibiotics. With early treatment, the illness usually resolves in two to four weeks and the outcome is likely to be good. Outcome becomes poor if complications develop.

Related information pertaining to Vietnam

#### COMMENTS

[Vaccination against typhoid fever](#) is recommended for travelers eating outside of major hotels or resorts as well as long-term travelers; adventure travelers; those wishing maximum disease protection.

#### PREVALENCE

There is an increased incidence of typhoid fever in southern regions of Vietnam.

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### Local facilities in selected cities in Vietnam

#### HOSPITALS IN HO CHI MINH CITY

**Provider Name:** Columbia Asia Medical Center (Gia Dinh)

**Address:** 01 No Trang Long Street

Binh Thanh District

**City:** Ho Chi Minh City

**State:** Vietnam

**Country:** Vietnam

**International Phone:** 848 803 0678

**Local Phone:** 803 0678

**Comments:** This small private outpatient clinic which is part of the Columbia Asia group. It offers primary care to the expatriate community. The French Vietnamese Hospital is preferred for hospitalization and for more complex medical conditions.

**Provider Name:** Family Medical Practice HCMC

**Address:** Diamond Plaza

34 Le Duan Street (Near Notre-Dame Cathedral)

District 1

**City:** Ho Chi Minh City

**State:** Vietnam

**Country:** Vietnam

**International Phone:** 84 8 822 7848

**Local Phone:** 822 7848

**Comments:** This is a medical practice that can provide routine outpatient care and emergency stabilization. The French Vietnamese Hospital is preferred for hospitalization and for more complex medical conditions.

**Provider Name:** French Vietnamese Hospital

**Address:** 6 rue Nguyen Luang Bang

Salle Than Phu

District 7

**City:** Ho Chi Minh City

**State:** Vietnam

**Country:** Vietnam

**International Phone:** 84 8 411 3333

**Local Phone:** 411 3333

**Comments:** This new (2003) multi-specialty facility is a MEDEX Regional Center of Excellence. It has a comprehensive and dedicated Diagnostic Centre as well as a 24/7 ER (A&E). English is spoken fluently by most physicians.

## HOSPITALS IN HANOI

**Provider Name:** Family Medical Practice Hanoi

**Address:** Van Phuc Diplomatic Compound  
Build A1, 298 I, Kim Ma Rd

**City:** Hanoi

**State:** Dac Lac

**Country:** Vietnam

**International Phone:** 84 4 843 0748

**Local Phone:** 843 0748

**Comments:** This private facility can provide outpatient routine care and emergency medical stabilization. The French Hanoi Hospital is preferred for more complex conditions.

**Provider Name:** French Hanoi Hospital

**Address:** Phuong Mai 1  
Dong Da

**City:** Hanoi

**State:** Dac Lac

**Country:** Vietnam

**International Phone:** 84 4 577 1100

**Local Phone:** 577 1100

**Comments:** This private multi-specialty facility is a MEDEX Regional Center of Excellence. There is a 24/7 EF (A&E) with ground ambulance services that can retrieve patients from surrounding cities.

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## How To Reach MEDEX

### MEDEX CONTACTS

From Vietnam, dial 00-1-410-453-6330 (can be called collect).

MEDEX will accept all collect calls. If you cannot call collect or if a MEDEX toll-free number is not available from your location, please be prepared to provide a call-back number so MEDEX can call you back.

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