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Country Focus: Nigeria

Pre-travel advice for those going to Nigeria

Visiting Nigeria

Most travellers to Nigeria have a safe and uneventful trip. However, potential health hazards include accidents and injuries, contaminated food/water and infections spread by mosquitoes, such as [malaria](#) and [yellow fever](#).

Road traffic accidents are common: be aware, especially when crossing roads and think carefully about transport. Using motorbikes or motorised two/three wheel vehicles increases your risk of road traffic accidents. Remember road maintenance and driving standards can be very different outside Europe.

Other potential hazards include sun, heat, air pollution and other mosquito spread illnesses including [dengue](#) and [Zika](#).

Before travel

See our [Nigeria country information page](#) for current travel health, malaria tablet and vaccine recommendations.

Make an appointment with your GP surgery or travel clinic to get appropriate antimalarial medication (even if you grew up in Nigeria, malaria is a significant risk and can be fatal). Check you are in date with all recommended travel and routine UK vaccines, including [measles, mumps and rubella \(MMR\)](#).

Polio, a virus spread by food and water contaminated with human faeces or direct contact with an infected person is a risk in Nigeria. It can cause paralysis but is vaccine preventable, so before you travel:

- Check you have completed a polio vaccine course according to the routine UK schedule.
- If your last polio vaccine was more than 10 years ago, a booster dose of inactivated polio containing vaccine (IPV) is recommended before travel.
- If you stay for four or more weeks, you may be asked for proof of a polio vaccine given four weeks to twelve months before your departure, as you leave Nigeria. Also, an additional polio vaccine is sometimes recommended for people who may be at higher risk of polio. For more information on these groups, and international certificate requirements, see our [polio vaccine recommendations for Nigeria](#).

[Rabies](#) - a fatal virus spread by contact with saliva from an infected animal is also a risk. Dogs are responsible for most human cases worldwide, but all animals can carry rabies. Be aware of the risk, consider having a rabies vaccine course before you travel and know what to do if you or your children are bitten or scratched.

There is currently a risk of Zika in Nigeria. If you are pregnant, you should consider not travelling until after your baby is born, as there are potential risks for you and the baby. If your trip is

unavoidable, see your GP, nurse or midwife before you go to discuss the risks and how to protect yourself.

Pack a [basic first kit](#) including antiseptic, diarrhoea treatment, gauze, painkillers, plasters and tweezers, insect repellent. If you take regular medicines, see our factsheet on [medicines and travel](#).

Get comprehensive travel health insurance for everybody travelling (including babies and children). Insurance should cover all pre-existing medical conditions, planned activities and all treatment/medical evacuation costs.

See the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) advice on [preparing for safe and healthy travel abroad](#). Check their [Nigeria travel advice](#) before you go, as they advise against travel to certain parts of the country.

During travel

There is a high risk of malaria in Nigeria, make sure you and your family take your antimalarial medication as recommended and get urgent medical help for any fever or flu like symptoms. Delaying malaria treatment can be fatal, especially for babies and young children.

Reduce your risk of malaria and other illnesses spread by insects by following [bite avoidance advice](#).

Take care with eating and drinking and [follow basic hygiene rules](#). Be prepared to manage [travellers' diarrhoea](#) but remember if you or anyone in the family has diarrhoea with blood and/or fever see a doctor straight away.

Remember, rabies is a risk in Nigeria:

- Avoid contact with animals, regardless of whether you received pre-travel rabies vaccine or not.
- Following a bite, scratch or any potential exposure, wash the wound site, follow immediate [first aid advice](#) and get urgent medical advice, even if the wound/exposure appears trivial.
- Carry your rabies vaccine records. If post-exposure treatment is not available locally, you will need to travel to a city or may need to return home.

After travel

Complete your antimalarial medication as recommended, even if you feel completely well. Get urgent medical attention for any fever or flu-like symptoms and tell your doctor you have travelled abroad to a country with a high risk of malaria.

If you are pregnant or considering pregnancy, remember to follow guidance on [Zika prevention](#).

Resources

- [Children](#)
- [Malaria](#)
- [Meningitis](#)
- [Pregnancy](#)
- [Sun](#)
- [World Health Organization: Road traffic injuries](#)
- [Zika](#)

