

[travel.state.gov](#) > [Intercountry Adoption](#) > [Country Information](#) > [Alerts & Notices](#) > **Ethiopia**



## Ethiopia

April 1, 2013

[Print](#) [Email](#)

### Notice: Health Concerns in Ethiopia

On March 14, 2013, U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa released an important message for U.S. citizens via email to U.S. adoption service providers and a notice on the U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa website about a recent increase in suspected meningitis cases in Ethiopia. The suspected cases are primarily in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR), but the area of concern extends north to include tourist areas around Hawassa and Lake Langano. The Department of State shares the full text below in order to ensure wide distribution among the adoption community. As always, we recommend that adoptive parents and other U.S. travelers check [Travel.State.gov](#) prior to traveling to Ethiopia or any other country for the latest travel information from the Department of State.

Many adopted children come from SNNPR, and adoptive parents are encouraged to work with their adoption service providers (ASPs) to ensure that children who come from affected areas are properly evaluated by a medical professional, and that treatment or vaccination be given if required. Given that children from all over Ethiopia live together in care centers in Addis Ababa, all adoptive parents should be aware that the risk of contracting meningitis is not necessarily limited to children who come from the affected region. The Embassy's Consular Section can provide a list of pediatricians working in Addis Ababa, but most ASPs have an existing network of health care providers, and general inquiries about your child's health situation are best directed to your ASP.

On a related note, many adopted children face significant health challenges in Ethiopia that require continuing treatment after immigration to the United States. While the Embassy's panel physician evaluates children for their fitness to travel and the likelihood of them transmitting a communicable disease, such as tuberculosis, it is primarily the responsibility of the ASP and the orphanage to ensure proper medical treatment from the time a child enters institutional care until the day he/she travels to the United States. Adoptive parents should expect that a child's medical file will travel with him/her from a rural clinic in the village where they were born, to the pediatrician's office in Addis Ababa, and then to be made available for use by the child's new physician in the United States. If such information is not made available as a matter of course, adoptive parents are encouraged to request it from their ASPs.

#### **Embassy Addis Ababa Notice:**

### Meningitis

According to the World Health Organization, Ethiopia is currently at the peak of the meningitis transmission season, which extends through March and April up to the beginning of May. Suspected cases of meningitis were reported in Southern Nation, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) and Oromia Region. So far this year cases were recorded in close to 60 woredas (local municipalities) across 14 zones of SNNPR and Oromia, with upsurges of cases in 16 woredas of SNNPR and Oromia. Woredas reporting increased cases of meningitis include Arbaminch Zuria, Halaba, Hawassa town, Dale, Shebedino, Gorche, and Wonsho in SNNPR, and Arsi Negele, Shalla, Shashemene Town, Shashemene Rural, Dodolla, Siraro, Wondo, and Gedeb Assassa in Oromia Region.

In light of these findings, the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa recommends that U.S. citizens residing and traveling in Ethiopia avoid travel to these

areas unless they have been vaccinated against meningitis within the past three years. If you were vaccinated recently, do not travel to these affected areas for at least 14 days after receiving the vaccination.

(Meningitis vaccinations do not take effect for 14 days.)

You can find detailed information on vaccinations and other health precautions on the [CDC website](#) . For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#) . The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#) .

If you are going to live in or travel to Ethiopia, please take the time to tell us about your trip by enrolling in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP). If you enroll, we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements. It will also help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency. You should remember to keep all of your information in STEP up to date. It is important during enrollment or updating of information to include your current phone number and current email address where you can be reached in case of an emergency.