

MALARIA

FACT SHEET



KEY FACTS

- Malaria is a disease spread by mosquitoes
- It is widespread in many tropical areas, but most cases (over 90%) happen in Africa
- Each year, malaria causes around 600,000 deaths, including in people who travel to risk areas
- Travel related malaria is most common in people who don't receive or follow preventive advice
- Pregnant women, children <5 years, those without a functioning spleen and those with weak immune systems are at higher risk of severe malaria
- All malaria cases are preventable

SYMPTOMS

- Malaria can cause fever, sweats, chills, muscle aches, headache, diarrhoea, cough, and coma
- It is easy to confuse malaria with other illnesses that have similar symptoms, like the flu
- It may take 7 days to many months after a mosquito bite for signs of illness to show up

PREVENTION

- Preventive measures work well if you follow them
- Remember **A, B, C, D**:
 - **Awareness.** Be aware of the risk. Find out if malaria is present where you're going
 - **Bite prevention.** Prevent bites by using insect repellent and sleeping under an insecticide treated bed net
 - **Chemoprophylaxis.** See your health care provider for advice about malaria prevention tablets
 - **Diagnosis and treatment.** If you feel unwell within 6 months of visiting a malaria risk area, seek medical help quickly for a malaria test

TREATMENT

- **Treatment** for malaria works very well and **can save your life** when **started early** in the illness
- **Don't wait – seek medical help quickly**

MORE INFORMATION

Recommendations vary, so please check official health information from your own country, such as:

- Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, United States: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/malaria>
- Travel Health Pro, United Kingdom <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/52/malaria>
- Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/malaria/risks-malaria.html>

See the ISTM Insect Bite Avoidance Fact Sheet for more info on how to prevent insect bites.

References

1. World Health Organization (2023) Key Facts. Available from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malaria> [Accessed 11/11/23]
2. Chiodini PL, Patel D and Goodyer L.. Guidelines for malaria prevention in travellers from the United Kingdom, 2023. London: UK Health Security Agency. Available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/malaria-prevention-guidelines-for-travellers-from-the-uk> [Accessed 11/11/23]

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