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

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

References


This fact sheet was developed by Jane Chiodini MSc in collaboration with the International Society of Travel Medicine Digital Communications Committee.