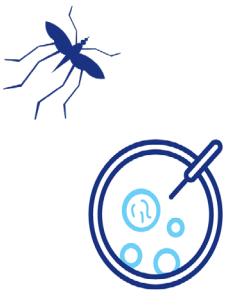
Corporate Travel Clinic

Factsheet Malaria



What

Malaria is caused by a parasite known as Plasmodium, which is transmitted by female Anopheles mosquitoes that primarily bite from dusk till dawn. When an infected mosquito bites a person, the parasites enter the bloodstream, multiply in the liver, and then re-enter the blood to invade and destroy red blood cells. If an Anopheles mosquito feeds on an infected human, it can become infected and continue the transmission cycle.

Who

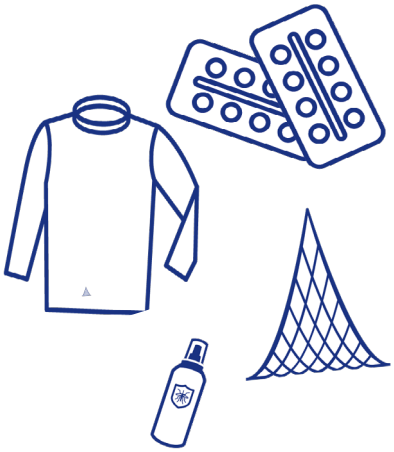
Malaria is a disease primarily found in tropical and subtropical regions, with different species showing specific geographical distributions. All travelers visiting malaria-endemic areas are at risk of infection. Pregnant women, the elderly, and individuals with immune deficiencies are especially at risk for severe disease.

Where and when

The global distribution of malaria is shifting, but 95% of cases still occur on the African continent. Resistance rates of malaria parasites to treatments also change over time. Be sure to consult a travel doctor for the latest information on your destination before traveling.

Prevention

Malaria prevention involves both bite avoidance and medication (chemoprophylaxis) to prevent infection. It is very important to prevent mosquito bites. This may be done by use of insect repellents, wearing protective clothing, sleeping under insectnets or in airconditioned rooms. Avoid mosquito-breeding areas. When you do get infected, it is equally important to prevent mosquito bites. Take antimalarial medication as directed if prescribed; this may include continuing the medication after returning home. Consult a specialist for advice on the best antimalarial options for your



Treatment

Anyone who develops symptoms possibly related to malaria, either while abroad or after returning from a malaria-endemic area, should seek assessment and testing for malaria. Prompt and accurate diagnosis is crucial, and if malaria is confirmed, treatment should begin immediately. For travelers spending more than 24 hours away from medical access, self-treatment kits may be recommended.

Symptoms

After a bloodmeal from an infected mosquito, symptoms of malaria typically appear between 12-17 days. The main symptoms include fever, headache, and muscle aches, though they may vary depending on the individual's immunity and the type of parasite. In cases of Plasmodium falciparum malaria, early initiation of treatment is crucial, as life-threatening complications can develop within days without treatment.

In case of infection

Uncomplicated malaria can progress to severe illness in non-immune individuals within hours to days, making prompt treatment essential. With appropriate treatment, parasites typically disappear within 48-72 hours. Follow-up tests may be needed to confirm parasite clearance. If you develop a fever 3-12 months after treatment, especially after returning from a malaria-endemic area, repeated malaria testing should be conducted.

Information provided by Corporate Travel Clinic Rotterdam.
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