## Malaria

### What is malaria?
Malaria is serious and sometimes fatal disease. It is caused by a parasite found in infected mosquitoes. Each year, about 1,500 cases of malaria are diagnosed in the United States. The majority of these cases are in travelers returning from countries with local transmission of malaria.

### How is malaria spread?
Malaria is mainly spread through the bite of an infected *Anopheles* mosquito. Malaria is less commonly spread through blood transfusion, organ transplant, or by sharing needles or syringes contaminated with blood. An infected mother can also spread malaria to her unborn child before or during delivery.

### Where can malaria be found?
Malaria is found in tropical and subtropical areas such as sub-Saharan Africa and in parts of Oceania. Visit the CDC website for more information.

### What are the signs and symptoms of malaria?
The most common symptoms include fever, and flu-like symptoms such as shaking chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness. Infected people may also experience nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Anemia (a condition in which the blood doesn't have enough healthy red blood cells) and jaundice (yellow coloring of the skin and eyes) have also been reported. If left untreated, infected people may develop severe complications.

### How long do symptoms take to appear after exposure?
For most people, symptoms begin 10 days to 4 weeks after infection. However, a person may feel ill as early as 7 days or as late as 1 year after initial exposure.

### Who is at risk for malaria?
Anyone can get malaria. Most cases occur in people who live in countries where malaria is commonly transmitted by mosquito bites.

### Can I donate blood if I have been in a country where there is malaria?
Blood banks, hospitals and other facilities collecting blood establish their own blood donation guidelines. To view the CDC recommendations, go to https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/blood_banks.html.

### How can malaria be prevented?
If traveling to an area with malaria, talk to your healthcare provider about taking drugs to prevent malaria (antimalarial drugs). Antimalarial drugs are not vaccines. However, they are medicines that can help prevent malaria. For best results, antimalarial drugs must be taken for the entire duration of the trip. Recommendations for antimalarial drugs differ by country of travel and the traveler's medical history, age, drug allergies, pregnancy status, and other factors. Some antimalarial drugs must be taken prior to the start of travel to allow enough time for it to become effective. Other antimalarial drugs only need to be started the day before travel. Talk to your healthcare provider for more details.

No antimalarial medicine is 100% protective. In addition, all medicines can have side effects.  Additional tools, such as insect repellent, protective clothing and mosquito bed nets, can help reduce the risk of malaria.

Continue

- When choosing mosquito repellent, make sure to purchase a product that has been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Always use the product as directed and reapply when necessary.
- When weather permits, wear protective clothing such as long sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks.
- When indoors, use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. If needed, sleep under a mosquito bed net.

To learn more on how to keep yourself healthy during your trip, visit www.cdc.gov/travel.

**Is there a malaria vaccine?**
No. There are no effective malaria vaccines. Vaccine clinical trials are ongoing.

**Is there a treatment for malaria?**
Yes. The disease should be treated early in its course, before it becomes serious and possibly life-threatening. Malaria can be cured with prescription drugs. The specific medicine and length of treatment depend on the type of malaria, where the person was infected, their age, whether they are pregnant, and how sick they are at the start of treatment. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information.