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# Malaria Awareness and Prevention

Every year on April 25, the world recognizes and brings awareness to malaria. World Malaria Day is intended to help showcase the widespread global efforts to control and eliminate the disease.

## Prevent Malaria

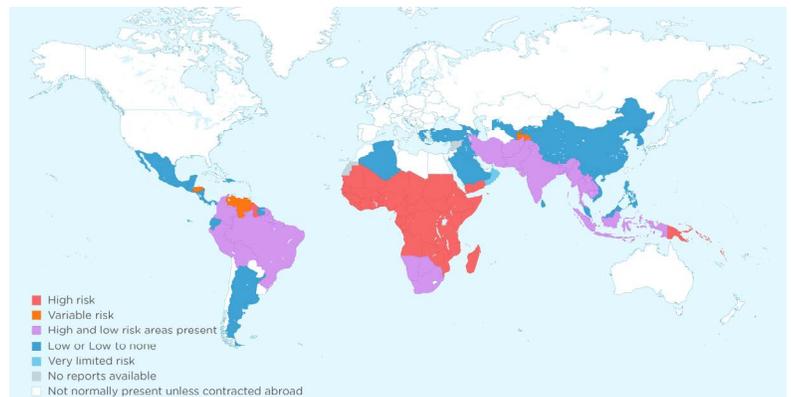
- Visit your primary physician 4-6 weeks prior to departure
- Take an antimalarial drug
- Prevent mosquito bites

## What is Malaria and How Are People Infected?

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease. It is transmitted by a parasite that commonly infects a certain type of female mosquito and is transferred to humans through the bites of those infected mosquitoes.

## How Common is Malaria and Where Does It Occur?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly half of the world's population is at risk of malaria. In 2017, an estimated 219 million cases of malaria were reported across 90 countries and the death toll reached 435,000, making the disease the 5th ranked cause of death worldwide. Africa has the highest risk, recording 93% of malaria-related deaths. Other regions at risk include Asia, South America and parts of the Caribbean. For more details on where malaria occurs, check the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/malaria/about/distribution.html](http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/about/distribution.html).



## If you believe you are infected:

- Seek medical care immediately
- Get tested as soon as possible
- Contact Assist America for guidance and to ensure your access to qualified care



### Can Malaria Be Prevented?

Yes, malaria can be prevented by taking antimalarial drugs and avoiding mosquito bites.

Visit your primary health care physician 4 to 6 weeks prior to your departure to get all the immunizations necessary for your destination and a prescription for the antimalarial drug. You'll have to follow your intake schedule strictly without missing any doses. For more information regarding the prevention drugs available, visit the CDC's Drug Table at [www.cdc.gov/malaria/travelers/drugs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/travelers/drugs.html).



In some countries, drugs sold may be counterfeit or of poor quality. Therefore, we suggest buying all the medications you will need for your trip before you leave your home country. Also, note the name of the medication and its manufacturer in case you lose your medicine.

Unfortunately, no drug guarantees 100% protection against malaria and treatment must be combined with mosquito bite prevention measures such as applying insect repellent, wearing long sleeves and pants and sleeping under an insecticide-treated mosquito net.

### Who Should Be Concerned About Malaria?

All travelers, child or adult, going to a country where malaria transmission cases are reported should take precautions no matter the reason of the trip (e.g. business trips, leisure travels, long-term and short-term trips, urban and rural destinations).

Pregnant women should avoid malaria-endemic regions during their pregnancy as malaria can harm both the mother and the fetus. If travel is a must, pregnant women should talk to their doctor to discuss pregnancy-safe prevention strategies.

### What Are the Symptoms and Treatment?

Symptoms usually appear 10 to 15 days after the mosquito bite but can sometimes develop as early as 7 days and as late as 12 months. The first symptoms – fever, headache, and chills – may be mild and difficult to recognize as malaria. However, if not treated within 24 hours, malaria can progress to severe illness, sometimes leading to death.

If you think you may be infected, seek medical assistance immediately. The WHO recommends that all suspected malaria cases be confirmed using a parasite-based diagnostic test (either using a microscopy or a rapid diagnostic test) before administering treatment. Results of such an exam can be available within 30 minutes.

The treatment of diagnosed malaria depends on three factors:

- 1) The infecting parasite species will determine how aggressive the treatment needs to be;
- 2) The clinical status of the patients will influence whether oral medicine can be prescribed or if parenteral treatment such as intravenous medication should be administered;
- 3) The parasite's drug resistance will help doctors choose the most appropriate drug or drug combination.

### Sources:

For more information regarding malaria, visit:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/malaria>
- <https://www.who.int/malaria/>
- <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malaria>