



MALARIA

Malaria is a serious and occasionally fatal disease. It is caused by one of five different parasites in the *Plasmodium* family, and is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito.

There is no vaccine available against malaria. Chemoprophylaxis (anti-malarial medication) may be considered to prevent malaria.

WHAT IS MY RISK?

All travellers are at risk in areas where malaria occurs.

Your risk is higher between sunset and sunrise especially if you participate in outdoor activities during this peak biting period. Travellers staying overnight in rural or remote areas may also be at greater risk. You can reduce your risk by taking measures to protect yourself from mosquito bites, including taking an appropriate anti-malarial medication if recommended by a health care provider.

Pregnant women, young children and people with a weakened immune system are at particular risk of more serious illness and complications of malaria.

If you previously lived in areas where malaria occurs, when you move away, you will lose any natural immunity that you may have to the disease. If you later travel to an area where malaria occurs, you will be just as much at risk of getting malaria as any other visitor to the area.

HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED?

- Malaria is spread to humans by the bite of a mosquito infected with malaria parasites.
- The mosquito that spreads malaria is usually active from sunset to sunrise.
- The risk for malaria transmission can be seasonal with an increase of risk during and after rainy seasons.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Symptoms can take from one week to several months to occur (depending on the type of malaria parasite).
- They are often similar to the flu, including fever, sweats, chills, headache, abdominal pain, muscle pain, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and feeling generally unwell.
- In more severe cases, complications may include seizures, coma, kidney and respiratory failure and shock, which may lead to death.



CAN MALARIA BE TREATED?

Treatment for malaria depends on a number of factors, including the species of malaria parasite. If identified early and treated appropriately, almost all cases of malaria can be completely cured.

WHERE IS MALARIA A CONCERN?

- Malaria transmission occurs in:
 - most of sub-Saharan Africa and limited areas in North Africa
 - large areas of South Asia, Southeast Asia, and some parts of East Asia
 - areas in South and Central America as well as the Caribbean, including Haiti and parts of the Dominican Republic and Mexico
 - Papua New Guinea and other small islands in the South Pacific/Oceania region
 - limited areas in the Middle East and Eastern Europe
- Most malaria cases and deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa.
- A list of countries and a map of where malaria occurs are available from the World Health Organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consult a health care provider or visit a travel health clinic preferably six weeks before you travel.

Follow the **"ABCD"** of malaria prevention:

- A. Be **"Aware"** of malaria risk, symptoms, and how long they take to appear.
- B. Know how to prevent mosquito **"Bites"**.
 - Protect yourself from mosquito bites particularly from sunset to sunrise.
- C. Take anti-malarial drugs or **"Chemoprophylaxis"**, if appropriate.
 - Travellers should consult a health care provider or visit a travel health clinic preferably six weeks before departure to discuss their risks, determine whether to take anti-malarial medication and if so, which one to take.
 - No anti-malarial medication is 100% effective in preventing the disease.
 - You must continue to take the medication until it is finished, even after your return to Canada.
- D. Seek medical help early for **"Diagnosis"**, if malaria-like symptoms develop.
 - Know the symptoms of malaria and seek medical attention **immediately** if a fever arises during or for up to one year after travel to regions at risk of malaria.
 - Be sure to tell your healthcare provider that you have travelled to a region where malaria is present.

RELATED LINKS

Assistance—sickness or injury while travelling:

www.travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/sick-injured

If you get sick after travelling:

www.travel.gc.ca/returning/sick

Insect bite prevention:

www.travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/insect-bite