

Know the Facts: Tips for Travelers about Malaria



World Malaria Day is observed around the world each April 25 to raise awareness about the impact of this serious, sometimes deadly disease. World Malaria Day rightly seeks to draw attention to the thousands of people at greatest risk for malaria, children and pregnant women who live in malarious areas of the world. However, people from countries without malaria, such as the United States, can also become infected when they travel to countries with malaria. This generally happens because of a lack of awareness about how to prevent malaria, not a lack of resources.

It is therefore important for travelers to know the facts about malaria, protect themselves, and seek treatment right away if they have symptoms of malaria.

Remember these 8 tips:

- 1) **Before you travel, learn whether malaria transmission occurs at your travel destination** by visiting the CDC Malaria Map at www.cdc.gov/malaria/map. Malaria occurs mostly in poor tropical and subtropical areas of the world where the weather is hot and humid. It is caused when a certain type of mosquito (*Anopheles*) carrying malaria parasites bites a person.
- 2) **See a health care provider so he or she can conduct an individualized risk assessment before you travel.** An individual risk assessment takes into account not only the destination country, but also details about the trip, including specific cities, type of setting where you will stay, season, and style of travel. In addition, conditions such as pregnancy or antimalarial drug resistance at your destination may affect the risk assessment. Afterwards, your health care provider will prescribe an antimalarial drug for you if necessary. Children's dosages of antimalarials may have to be specially prepared; allow plenty of time for the pharmacy to fill your child's prescription.

- 3) **Buy your antimalarial drugs (and all the other medicines you'll need) in your home country before your trip.** In some countries (including those with malaria risk), counterfeit ("fake") or substandard (not made according to U.S. standards) drugs may be sold and may not be effective. Antimalarial drugs should always be purchased before you travel!
- 4) **Take your antimalarial drugs as prescribed.** People who do not take the right dose or do not take the right antimalarial drug are at greater risk for getting malaria infection than people who take their antimalarial drugs correctly.
- 5) **Use other measures to prevent mosquito bites:** Apply insect repellent, wear long sleeve and long pants, and sleep in a mosquito-free setting or use an insecticide-treated bed net. No antimalarial drug is 100% protective so be sure to use other measures as well.
- 6) **Know the signs and symptoms of malaria,** which can include fever and other symptoms of a flu-like illness—including shaking chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may also occur. If not promptly treated, the infection can become severe and may cause kidney failure, seizures, mental confusion, coma, and death.
- 7) **Get immediate medical attention** if you become sick with a fever or flu-like illness while traveling and up to 1 year after returning home. Malaria is a medical emergency.
- 8) **Be aware of blood donation eligibility**
Travelers are often surprised to learn that even if they followed all of the prevention advice and did not become sick with malaria, recent travel to a place where malaria transmission occurs makes them ineligible to donate blood for 1 year. This is done to keep the U.S. blood supply as safe as possible.



Travel safely!

To learn more about malaria, visit the CDC Malaria Website at www.cdc.gov/malaria.