

Preventing Malaria During Travel

What is malaria?

Malaria is an infection that is carried by mosquitoes in some areas of the world. It is most common in parts of Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. It also is found in Mexico, Central America, and South America.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of malaria include high fever, chills, muscle aches, joint pain, and headaches. You should get medical attention if you have any of these symptoms while traveling in an area where malaria is common. Symptoms can appear up to one year after travel to these areas.

How is it diagnosed?

Malaria is diagnosed with a blood test. The test can tell which type of malaria you have and how much malaria is in your blood. The test will also help your doctor decide which medicine should be used for treatment.

How can I protect myself?

You should use bed nets that are treated with insect repellent, and wear clothes treated with

pesticides. You also should use a bug spray that keeps mosquitoes away. There are some medicines that prevent malaria if you start taking them before you travel. Talk to your doctor before your trip. He or she will choose a medicine for you based on where you are going, your age, and your medical conditions. Some malaria drugs are not recommended if you are pregnant.

Where can I get more information?

AAFP's Patient Education Resource

Web site: <http://familydoctor.org/384.xml>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/>

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)

Web site: http://www.unicef.org/health/index_malaria.html

World Health Organization

Web site: <http://www.who.int/topics/malaria/en/>

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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