Malaria prevention advice for travellers

Please read this information carefully – it won’t take you very long.
What is malaria?

Malaria is a parasitic infection spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito.

Photo credit: James Gathany
Where is malaria found in the world?
The global burden of malaria

According to the latest WHO Malaria Report of 2014, there were about 198 million cases of malaria in 2013 and an estimated 584,000 deaths. Africa is the most affected continent.

In 2013, an estimated 437,000 African children died before their 5th birthday due to malaria.
Malaria in UK travellers

- Each year well over 1000 people return to the UK with malaria
- We sadly also have quite a number of cases where travellers have died from the disease
- The greatest number of cases are in those returning to visit friends and family
- Even if you used to live in a malarious country, you WILL NOT have protection from the disease
Malaria prevention advice

- Be aware of your risk
- Use measures to prevent being bitten
- Ensure you take your tablets (chemoprophylaxis) AND always complete the course
- Report any flu like symptoms as a matter of urgency, in the period up to 12 months after return from your trip
Be aware of malaria

It is very important you tell your travel health adviser:

- Where you are going
- When you are going
- How long you will be there for
- What you are doing when there

(for example, going on a night safari, staying in a rural area)
Maps at www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Malarious areas can vary even within one country

Key to risk

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Bite prevention

• If you don’t get bitten you can’t get malaria!
• However the bite doesn’t always produce a strong reaction so you may not know you have been bitten at all
• Other diseases are transmitted by mosquitoes who may bite in the day time as well, so prevention should be taken seriously 24 hours a day
Tips about insect repellents

- If travelling to a tropical destination, a content of up to 50% DEET is recommended in anyone 2 months of age upwards.
- Check the label of the product for content and suitability.
- In a hot and humid tropical country you will sweat more, therefore the repellent needs to be applied frequently.
- Ensure you do not get the repellent near your eyes or mouth.
- Apply after sun cream and always reapply after swimming.
- DEET is a ‘plasticizer’ so do not allow it come into contact with plastics and materials such as leather watch straps.
The myths!

• There is **NO SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE** that products like garlic capsules, yeast extract and vitamin B12 give any protection.

• There’s no harm in using them, but do so in conjunction with conventional measures as well.
Room protection

- An air conditioned room is the most effective protection as long as it is working as the mosquitoes can’t get in!
- If you’re staying in a room with window screens, close them early evening and spray the room with knock down spray to kill any mosquitoes already in the room
- Consider using an electric vaporiser
Mosquito nets

• If going to a high risk area without safe air conditioning, you would be advised to use a net, in which case it needs to be an IMPREGNATED mosquito net

• Nets can be bought in this state or get a kit to treat it yourself – make sure you read the instructions on the product

• A hanging kit may also be needed depending on the type of net

• Take a small sewing kit and make sure you repair any tears in the net immediately

• Longer lasting insecticide nets (LLINs) of a different material are used in Africa - similar products are becoming available for travellers now. Check out availability at outdoor shops or websites such as www.lifesystems.co.uk and www.nomad.co.uk
Malaria tablets

• We have a variety of different malaria tablets to choose from in the UK

• It depends where you are going and if there is any resistance of the tablets to the malaria parasite in the country you are visiting

• It is vital you discuss the options with your travel adviser to select the right drug for you and for your destination
How effective are malaria tablets?

• No tablet will give you 100% protection
• HOWEVER, if you take the tablets, you are less likely to get very ill and to die
• It is also VITAL you complete the course of malaria tablets
• The travellers that have died in the UK from malaria are most often those that took no tablets or did not complete the course
Wanting more information on malaria tablets?

www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk
Where can you obtain your malaria tablets?

• Certain malaria tablets for the higher risk malarious areas are prescription only medicines

• The prescription can be provided from your GP surgery although you can now also get them prescribed after a risk assessment in some pharmacies and even online

• If you choose to go to an online service you MUST ensure it is a bona fide source, as counterfeit drugs are a growing problem. In the UK an online pharmacy would display this logo [Registered Pharmacy logo] which would include the pharmacist’s registration number as listed on the General Pharmaceutical Council – www.pharmacyregulation.org/
What are the symptoms of malaria?

A non specific flu like illness, usually with

Fever
Shivering
Headache
Diarrhoea
Cough
What should you do if you have these symptoms?

Go to your surgery and tell the doctor or nurse that you have been abroad and say you think you may have malaria.

It is vital that you are seen urgently
How soon should you do this?

• **IMMEDIATELY** this is VERY IMPORTANT

• Most cases of malaria occur within **one to three months** after returning from your trip, but can happen as late as **12 months after return**

• You will need an immediate test to check whether or not you have malaria
Why is this message so important?

- There are different types of malaria that can affect humans and the most dangerous type is *Plasmodium Falciparum*.
- This is the type that, in some rare circumstances, can kill a human within 24 hours of developing the symptoms of malaria.
- It is therefore vitally important to remember these symptoms of malaria and act promptly if you suffer them by seeking urgent medical help.
Where to go for more information?

NHS Choices
www.nhs.uk/conditions/Malaria/Pages/Introduction.aspx

If you’re interested in more detail go to
http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1203496943523
Have a safe trip!