

MALARIA

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease caused by a parasite that commonly infects a certain type of mosquito, which feeds on humans.

KEY FACTS

Malaria:

- is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected female *Anopheles* mosquitoes;
- is preventable and curable.
- People with Malaria often experience fever, chills, and flu-like illness. Left untreated, they may develop severe complications and die.
- In 2018, there were an estimated 228 million cases of Malaria worldwide.
- The estimated number of Malaria deaths stood at 405,000 in 2018.
- Children aged under 5 years are the most vulnerable group affected by Malaria; in 2018, they accounted for 67% (272,000) of all Malaria deaths worldwide.
- Africa carries a disproportionately high share of the global Malaria burden. In 2018, the region was home to 93% of Malaria cases and 94% of Malaria deaths.

HEALTH RISKS

- In 2018, nearly half of the world's population was at risk of Malaria. Most Malaria cases and deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa. However South-East Asia, Eastern Mediterranean, Western Pacific, and the Americas are also at risk.



Photo: CDC

- Some population groups are at considerably higher risk of contracting Malaria, and developing severe disease, than others. These include infants, children under 5 years of age, pregnant women and patients with HIV/AIDS, as well as non-immune migrants and mobile populations.
- If Malaria is left untreated, it can cause severe complications resulting into death.

SYMPTOMS

- In a non-immune individual, symptoms usually appear 10–15 days after the infective mosquito bite.
- The first symptoms – fever, headache, and chills – may be mild and difficult to recognize as Malaria. If not treated within 24 hours, *P. falciparum* Malaria can progress to severe illness, often leading to death.
- Children with severe Malaria frequently develop one or more of the following symptoms: severe anaemia, respiratory distress in relation to metabolic acidosis, or cerebral Malaria.

- Malaria may cause anaemia and jaundice (yellow colouring of the skin and eyes) because of the loss of red blood cells.
- If not promptly treated, the infection can become severe and may cause kidney and other organ failure, seizures, mental confusion, coma, and death.

TREATMENT

- If Malaria is diagnosed and treated promptly with anti-Malarial drugs, virtually everyone will make a full recovery.
- Early diagnosis and treatment of Malaria reduces disease and prevents deaths. It also contributes to reducing Malaria transmission. The best available treatment, particularly for *P. falciparum* Malaria, is artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT).
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommend that all cases of suspected Malaria be confirmed using parasite-based diagnostic testing before administering treatment.
- In addition to anti-Malarial drugs, drinking plenty of fluids is very important to prevent dehydration.

PREVENTION

- Use insect repellent. Do not spray repellent on the skin under clothing. Bite avoidance measures to prevent Malaria should start before dusk and continue until after dawn.
- If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.

- Wear clothes, full sleeve and preferably light-coloured that cover as much of the body as possible.
- Sleeping under an insecticide-treated net (ITN) can reduce contact between mosquitoes and humans by providing both a physical barrier and an insecticidal effect.
- Indoor residual spraying (IRS) with insecticides is another powerful way to rapidly reduce Malaria transmission. It involves spraying the inside of housing structures with an insecticide, typically once or twice per year.
- Anti-Malarial medicines can be used to prevent Malaria. Chemoprophylaxis suppresses blood stage of Malaria infections, thereby preventing disease.

Additional health information to transport workers who travels in between countries

Malaria infection rates vary in different parts of the world. Many transport workers travel beyond national boundaries. If you are in a country, where there is a high prevalence of Malaria you need to be extra careful and protect yourself.

As medical advancement is always happening the ITF will periodically update this information, as necessary. You can also keep yourself updated on Malaria infection from WHO website at:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/Malaria>



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