



MALARIA

What is Malaria?

Malaria is an acute febrile illness caused by Plasmodium parasites, which are spread to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.

It is preventable and curable

Causes

Malaria is caused by a single-celled parasite of the genus plasmodium. The parasite is transmitted to humans most commonly through mosquito bites.

Malaria transmission cycle

Malaria spreads when a mosquito becomes infected after biting a person with the disease and the infected mosquito then bites a noninfected person. The malaria parasites enter that person's bloodstream and travel to the liver. When the parasites mature, they leave the liver and infect red blood cells.

Other modes of transmission

Because the parasites that cause malaria affect red blood cells, people can also catch malaria from exposure to infected blood, including:

- From mother to unborn child
- Through blood transfusions
- By sharing needles used to inject drugs

Who is at Risk?

- Infants (Less than 1 year) and children (less than five years)
- Pregnant women
- Nonimmune civilian and travelers
- Disease-naïve populations (People living in areas where there is very low malaria incidence)
- HIV or AIDS-infected patients



Symptoms of malaria

The malaria fever symptoms usually appear within two weeks (10–14 days) from the day of infection by a Plasmodium-infected mosquito (malaria vector). The early symptoms of malaria include a cold, headache, and a high temperature with chills. Some people, especially those who have previously been infected with malaria, may experience only minor symptoms.

The following are the malaria fever symptoms:

- Feeling very tired
- Difficulty in breathing
- Nausea and vomiting
- Increased bowel movements (diarrhea in children)
- Cough
- joint pain
- Bloody urine (dark-colored which may look like coca cola)
- Seizures (fitting)
- Yellow discoloration of eyes and skin (Jaundice)

PREVENTION OF MALARIA

These are some common measures to being infected by mosquitoes and prevent malaria disease:

- Usage of Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellent
- Dressed in long sleeves and pants
- Prevent mosquitoes from entering the room at night
- Usage of insecticide treated mosquito net while sleeping
- Stagnant water should be cleared
- Taking intermittent preventative anti-malarial drugs for those who are at high risk. (Must be prescribed by a medical practitioner)



Treatment

Malaria is a serious and potentially life-threatening disease. If your child has any of the about symptoms, don't delay, take your child to the nearest health facility for prompt diagnosis and treatment. Malaria is treatable.

One at the health facility your child will be pricked on the fingers and a rapid diagnostic test, and a blood slide test will be done. Once your child tests positive and depending on the severity of the illness they will be given either oral or intravenous antimalarial

Remember, early detection and treatment are crucial in preventing complications and saving lives.

