



Malaria

What is malaria?

Malaria is a disease that is passed to humans through the bite of an infected female *Anopheles* mosquito. It is a very serious disease that sometimes results in death. Malaria is more commonly found in developing countries and tropical and subtropical regions of the world.

How is malaria spread?

An infected mosquito carries malaria parasites in its saliva. When the mosquito bites a human, the malaria parasites are passed on to the human. There are four types of malaria parasites, which can result in four types of malaria. It is possible for malaria to be transmitted by a pregnant woman to her unborn baby and through blood transfusions.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Persons with malaria are typically very sick with high fever, chills and flu-like illness (headache, muscle aches, tiredness). Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may also occur. Anemia and jaundice may follow. Kidney failure, seizures, mental confusion, coma and death may occur if malaria is not treated. Symptoms can occur up to one year after the bite, so it is important to inform your health care provider of any travel within the prior 12 months.

How is it diagnosed?

A person with these symptoms should be seen by a health care provider as soon as possible. A blood test will detect malaria parasites.

How is it treated?

Malaria is treated with prescription medicines. Which medicine and how long you take that medicine depends on several factors:

- the type of malaria;
- the age of the infected person;
- whether or not the infected person is pregnant;
- where the person was infected; and
- how severely ill the person is at the start of treatment.

How is it prevented?

There is no vaccine to prevent malaria; however, there are steps you can take to reduce your chance of becoming infected.

If you are traveling to an area where malaria is common, you should do all of the following:

- visit your health care provider four to six weeks prior to your trip to get an antimalarial drug if needed and take it as directed.
- wear insect repellent and long-sleeved clothing, particularly at night.
- sleep under bed nets that have been treated with insecticide.

How does it affect my family?

Both children and adults can have malaria, but children are affected more severely.

For more information, call the Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health at 336-641-7777 or visit our website at www.guilfordcountync.gov or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov

Free language assistance is available upon request.

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