



MALARIA FACT SHEET FOR HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS

Florida Department of Health

If you are planning a return visit to Haiti, you and your traveling family members may be at risk for malaria. Malaria occurs in most part of Haiti, including cities. Even if you were born in a country with malaria, it is still possible for you to get sick.

- You may have lost any protective immunity that you had in the past.
- Your children born in the United States have no immunity at all.
- You could become very sick with malaria now, even if you had malaria in the past and did not get seriously ill.

There are many steps you can take to protect yourself from malaria. Some will also protect you against dengue and other serious diseases spread by mosquitoes.

Prevent Mosquito Bites

- If possible, remain indoors in a screened or air-conditioned area between dusk and dawn.
- If no screening or air conditioning is available, use bug spray containing a pyrethroid in living and sleeping areas and sleep under bed nets, preferably insecticide-treated.
 - For information on ordering insecticide-treated bed nets, visit www.travmed.com, phone 1-800-872-8633 or www.travelhealthhelp.com, phone 1-888-621-3952
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and a hat when you go outdoors.
- Use insect repellent when you go outdoors. Sprays that contain DEET (N,N-diethyl-metoluamide) offer good protection. Follow the directions on the product label.
- Read the label instructions to make sure the repellent is age appropriate. DEET should not be used on children younger than two months of age.
- Children should not handle repellent. Adults should apply repellent first to their own hands and then transfer it to the child's skin and clothing, avoiding the child's eyes and mouth.
- Protect infants by using a carrier draped with mosquito netting with an elastic edge for a tight fit.
- Higher concentrations of DEET may last longer; however, concentrations over 50% provide no added protection. Timed-release DEET products may have a longer effect than liquid products.

Antimalarial Drugs

- Visit your healthcare provider 4-6 weeks before traveling to Haiti. This will allow you to get travel information, antimalarial drug prescriptions, and vaccinations for other diseases.
- Purchase your antimalarial drugs before traveling overseas. Drugs bought in other countries may not protect you from malaria. For complete protection, take all of your drugs as prescribed before your trip, while you are traveling, and after you return to the U.S. Partial treatment may result in infection.

Other Precautions

- Know the signs of a possible malaria infection, such as fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and yellowing of the skin.
- If you or another traveler gets sick, either while traveling or even several months after you return to the U.S., seek immediate medical attention by going to your family's healthcare provider or the nearest emergency department. Tell the healthcare provider that you have been in an area where malaria occurs. If not treated promptly, malaria can quickly cause serious illness and death.

For more information on malaria, contact your county health department. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website (www.cdc.gov) and the CDC Health Information for International Travel book (www.cdc.gov/travel/content/yellowbook/home-2008.aspx) are also good resources.