

# Mosquito-Borne Infections from Travel: Prevention

## Definition

- Mosquitos can spread infections to humans.
- People who live in or travel to high-risk areas can get these infections.
- They are also called "tropical diseases."

## Health Information

### Causes

- Mosquitos can spread many kinds of infections by biting people.
- Infection risk is higher in certain places, most often tropical. The hot, humid weather lets mosquitoes breed in large numbers year-round.
- Climate change is spreading these diseases to other places in the world.

### Types of Infections

- **Dengue.** This virus causes fever with chills and severe headache with eye pain. It also causes severe bone and muscle pains. A widespread pink rash is common. Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/dengue](http://www.cdc.gov/dengue).
- **Chikungunya.** This virus causes fever, headache and painful swollen joints. Hands and feet hurt first. Rarely, a widespread pink rash may occur. Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/chikungunya](http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya).
- **Yellow Fever.** This virus attacks the liver and kidneys. It causes yellow skin and eyes (jaundice). Also causes fever with chills, backache, and headache. Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/yellowfever](http://www.cdc.gov/yellowfever).
- **Zika virus.** Most people with Zika virus have no symptoms. Some (20%) will have mild illness. Mild Zika symptoms are fever, joint pain, headache, pink rash and red eyes. If a pregnant woman gets Zika, it can cause birth defects in the baby. Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/zika](http://www.cdc.gov/zika).
- **Malaria.** Caused by a parasite that enters red blood cells and destroys them. It can cause yellow skin and eyes (jaundice). High fevers occur every 2 to 3 days. Body aches and severe headaches are common. Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/malaria](http://www.cdc.gov/malaria).

## Care Advice

### 1. Key Points

- You can get infections from mosquito bites while traveling.
- Extra care and repellent use can prevent many mosquito bites.
- Vaccines can prevent yellow fever, dengue and malaria.
- Here is some information that should help.

### 2. Prepare for Travel - Resources

- Visit the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Travel Health website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>. It has up-to-date information on infection risks for your specific travel area.
- Experts can help you at the Traveler's Health Hotline toll-free number, 877-394-8747.
- **Zika virus.** There are special cautions for areas with Zika virus. The CDC recommends that pregnant women avoid travel to high-risk areas. Zika infection in the first trimester has the greatest risk of causing birth defects.

### 3. Prepare for Travel - Vaccines and Medicines

- There are vaccines to prevent yellow fever and malaria.
- Medicines to prevent malaria are recommended before travel to certain areas.
- Check the CDC Travel website or ask your doctor if you need these vaccines or medicines.

### 4. Prevent Mosquito Bites

- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and a hat.
- Mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk. Limit your child's outdoor play during these times.
- Try to avoid areas with any standing water. Reason: it's where mosquitoes lay their eggs.
- Keep bugs out of the home by fixing any broken screens.
- Use bed nets at night to protect you during sleep.

### 5. Insect Repellents for Skin - DEET

- Use insect repellents that have DEET on areas of exposed skin. These products work well to protect you from bites. Read the label before using.
- For children younger than 2 years old, use 10% DEET. After 2 years old, you can use 30% DEET. 10% DEET protects for 2 hours. 30% DEET protects for 6 hours.
- Don't apply DEET to the hands if the child sucks the thumb or fingers. Reason: to prevent poisoning.
- Don't apply to skin near the eyes or mouth.
- Don't apply to skin that is covered by clothing.
- Don't put any repellent on areas that are sunburned or have rashes. Reason: DEET is absorbed too much in these areas.
- Remember to wash DEET off with soap and water when your child returns indoors.
- Picaridin is an approved insect repellent that is equal to 10% DEET. It can safely be applied to skin or clothing.

### 6. Insect Repellents for Clothing

- Products with permethrin (such as Duranon) work well to repel mosquitos.
- Unlike DEET, these products are only put on clothing, NOT on the skin.
- Put it on shirt cuffs, pant cuffs, shoes and hats. You can also put it on mosquito nets and sleeping bags.
- Do not put permethrin on the skin. Reason: sweat stops it from working.

## Call Your Doctor If

- You have medical questions related to your travel
- You think your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

### Pediatric Care Advice

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