

## Can I avoid getting malaria again?

Although you cannot completely prevent yourself from getting this infection, there are several ways of reducing the risk. If you are travelling to somewhere affected by malaria, please seek advice from your GP or a travel clinic before you travel.

The main ways to protect yourself:

- **Avoiding mosquito bites** – mosquito repellents (especially those containing DEET) should be used on exposed skin, especially in the evening. Wearing long trousers and long-sleeved tops also helps to prevent mosquito bites.
- **Sleeping under insecticide-treated bed nets** – this significantly reduces your chance of being bitten by an infected mosquito.
- **Taking antimalarial drugs** – tablets to prevent malaria (chemoprophylaxis) are very effective if taken as prescribed. There are a number of different types and the regimen recommended for you will depend on where you are travelling to. The tablets will need to be started before you travel, continued when you are away and then for a short time after you return. Your doctor or travel clinic will give you further information – please contact them in plenty of time before you travel.

## Further information

### Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about malaria, please contact the Infectious Diseases Department on **020 7188 3148** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

### Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.  
**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS.  
**t:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'  
**t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

### Language Support Services

**t:** 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

### NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.  
**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Leaflet number: 2368/VER1**

Date published: December 2014

Review date: December 2017

© 2014 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

# Outpatient treatment of falciparum malaria in adults

This leaflet explains more about falciparum malaria and how we can help when you come to the Infectious Diseases Department.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

## What is falciparum malaria?

Malaria is an infection caused by the bite of mosquitoes in tropical countries.

There are five types of malaria infection – **falciparum malaria** is the most serious and may be life-threatening. Although adults living in malaria-affected areas often develop some immunity to the infection, this may be lost after living in the UK for a while.

Malaria is a fairly common infection in the UK – 1500 people were reported to be infected in 2013, and eight out of 10 of them were infected with falciparum malaria. Most patients get the infection when visiting friends and relatives in their country of origin.

**Remember, malaria can be fatal if left untreated.**

## What are the signs and symptoms?

All forms of malaria may cause:

- fever, chills and flu-like symptoms
- headache
- muscle or joint aches
- cough
- diarrhoea or vomiting.

**Falciparum malaria** may cause very serious symptoms, such as:

- confusion or drowsiness (cerebral malaria)
- breathing difficulties
- a reduction in the amount of urine you pass (renal failure).

## What tests are needed to confirm the diagnosis?

The diagnosis of falciparum malaria is confirmed by your nurse or doctor taking a blood sample and sending it to the laboratory to be tested.

Once you have been assessed by your doctor and had your blood tests analysed, we may decide that admission to hospital is unnecessary. If this is the case, you will be prescribed appropriate treatment.

## What treatment is needed and are there any side effects?

Several medications are effective in treating falciparum malaria. At Guy's and St Thomas' we usually use **Malarone™ (proguanil and atovaquone)**. This drug is taken as four tablets once a day for three days and it is very important to complete the course. It may take up to two days for your symptoms to improve after starting a course of Malarone™.

Side effects to Malarone™ are not very common but may include nausea, vomiting

and headache, among others. Further information about possible side effects can be found in the manufacturer's patient information leaflet supplied with the medicine.

If your doctor prescribes you a different medicine, he/she will advise you how to take it and what side effects you may experience.

## Is there anything I need to look out for at home?

If you experience any of the symptoms below, you should attend the Emergency Department (A&E) at St Thomas' Hospital or go to your local A&E department immediately:

- vomiting within one hour of taking your anti-malarial tablets or vomiting back the tablets
- starting to feel **more ill** after leaving hospital
- continuing to have fever or chills at the end of the three-day treatment course.

## Will I have a follow-up appointment?

Yes, we will ask you to attend the Infectious Diseases Department at St Thomas' Hospital in about two weeks – one of our doctors will contact you by telephone to arrange a convenient time for you. We will take the opportunity at this visit to make sure that you have fully recovered from your illness and may offer screening tests for other infectious diseases.