

# Malaria Prevention Medicine: Get the Facts



Every year people who live in the Fairfax Health District who travel to other countries get malaria from infected mosquitoes. This happens most often when people travel to countries where malaria is commonly found.

Taking medication is one of the most effective ways to prevent malaria. However, seventy percent of people who got malaria during travel said they did not take medicine to prevent it.

Malaria is serious disease caused by a parasite that infects a type of mosquito. You can prevent malaria by taking medicine when it is prescribed for you and avoiding mosquito bites.

## **You can get malaria as an adult even if you had it as a child.**

Protection that you may have had while growing up in a country where malaria is common is lost quickly after moving away. This makes you as likely to get sick as someone who has never had malaria.

## **It's always better to prevent getting malaria than to try to treat it.**

Many people think malaria is mild and easy to treat with medicine from the country they are visiting. Depending on where you travel, the medicine available may not work or may be counterfeit (fake). And it may be expensive if you get very sick and need to be hospitalized. Malaria can become severe and may lead to death if it is not treated.

## **You can get medicine to prevent malaria even if you do not have a health care provider.**

You can get a prescription for malaria prevention medicine from the Fairfax County Health Department. You can also get travel vaccines from the Health Department. Make an appointment at one of our five health clinics by calling 703-246-7100.

There are also several other places in Fairfax County where you can get medicine before you travel.

Find a location at [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/find-clinic](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/find-clinic)

## **Follow prescription instructions to prevent malaria.**

Some people start taking the medicine but stop taking it early. You increase your risk of malaria if you don't follow the prescription instructions. Depending on the medicine, you should take it for the recommended time before, during, and after travel.

**For more information about malaria and mosquito bite prevention for travelers, please visit:**

**[www.cdc.gov/malaria/travelers/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/travelers/index.html)**

