



# Personal Protection Against Insect Bites & Malaria

The best form of protection against Malaria (and many other diseases) is to try and ensure you are not bitten by insects while abroad. Following some basic guidelines will help to reduce the discomfort and the risks involved in insect bites.

- ❑ Where possible **avoid going out-of-doors between dusk and dawn**. Some species of mosquitoes will bite indoors also but nevertheless the majority of these insects tend to prefer to eat out!
- ❑ Wear **long sleeved clothing** to cover your arms and longer dresses or trousers for protection of your legs.
- ❑ Avoid dark coloured clothing as they tend to attract mosquitoes. Wear light coloured clothes if possible.
- ❑ Use **insect repellents** to dissuade mosquitoes from alighting on your exposed skin. Usually ones with a high content of diethyltolumide (DEET 30% - 50%) are the most effective though there are some other types which are useful for children or those with very sensitive skin. Never exceed the recommended manufacturers dosage especially in small children. Wash any excess off your skin before sleep unless the risk is too high. A small amount of the DEET may be absorbed through the skin and have toxic effects.
- ❑ Where possible choose an **air-conditioned room**. Always check the unit is working and set to air-conditioning mode. Look for water dripping from the outlet pipe to ensure that the air-conditioner is actually working properly.
- ❑ Use **mosquito nets** where possible. Check there are no mosquitoes inside the net before you, or your child, retires for the night. Check for breaks in the net. DEET sprays or permethrin can be used to impregnate the net for added protection.
- ❑ Securely **close any screens on the doors** and windows before dusk.
- ❑ Use **anti-mosquito sprays** around the room towards dusk. Concentrate especially on the doors and window frames. Also spray the curtains and the centre of the room.
- ❑ **Mosquito coils** and **electric heated mats** which release toxic compounds to the mosquito are of value but the high pitched sound buzzers are not recommended.
- ❑ Don't use **PERFUMES** or **AFTERSHAVES**, especially in the evening time as these seem to attract mosquitoes and other biting insects.
- ❑ If you are staying in a hotel **choose a floor above the third** as mosquitoes and sandflies tend to prefer the lower levels and the intensity of bites should be less.
- ❑ If you are living in areas where there are a lot of mosquitoes try and ensure that they are not breeding in open water containers around your house. Some require a large expanse of water and others only a simple upturned tyre with some residual water.

## For those with a strong history of allergy to insect bites .....

Always take extra care not to be bitten by following the suggestions above. But also try to . . . .

- ✓ Carry some ointments with you to use as soon as you see any insect bite. Usually ointments or creams containing a steroid and an antibiotic will be the most effective.
- ✓ Carry some of the more potent anti histamine tablets with you for your journey. Remember that they may interact with alcohol to always reduce your intake or abstain totally.
- ✓ If your allergy is very severe you may need to take anti histamine tablets throughout the time you are abroad. In this case start a day before you arrive and continue for about a further day on your return. The more modern ones now are 'non-sedative' and so should not cause drowsiness.
- ✓ If you frequently collapse when bitten or stung make certain you wear a medi-alert bracelet all the time. Also inform your courier so that some extra care can be made available if necessary.
  - ❑ Some patients may need to invest in a Epipen. This self contained injection contains a small quantity of Epinephine and is only for use in an emergency. The injection is designed to be easily used either by the individual or by a second person. It must only be given into the outer aspect of the thigh to make sure that it does not enter a blood vessel. After administration the individual must attend for full detailed medical attention as soon as possible. A second serious response may occur once the epipen effects have worn off. Check the expiry date carefully as this medication tends to have a short shelf life.
- ✓ Try not to scratch bites. This is usually how they become infected. Rubbing gently will have the same soothing effect but lead to less trouble.
- ✓ A luke warm bath or shower will often soothe the irritation from bites.
- ✓ If your irritation is severe, sleeping tablets may help to give you a better nights sleep.
- ✓ Always arrange for a consultation with a physician before your journey and discuss through all these important issues.
- ✓ If you have been badly bitten always attend for a consultation following your return home.

## Check List

Depending on the severity of your reaction to insect bites you may like to use the following list to make sure you have what is needed before your trip.

- ✓ **Insect Repellent**
- ✓ **Antihistamine Tablets (Sedative & non- Sedative)**
- ✓ **Sleeping Tablets**
- ✓ **AfterBite Cream (eg Antibiotic/Steroid)**
- ✓ **Medi-Alert Bracelet**
- ✓ **Mosquito Net (not normally required)**
- ✓ **Mosquito plug-in heated mats**

- ✓ Travel Accessories
- ✓ Tropical Diagnostic Laboratory
- ✓ Tropical Disease Screening Centre
- ✓ W.H.O. registered Yellow Fever Vaccination Centre
- ✓ International Vaccination and Malaria Advice Centres

- ✓ **Aston Quay**
- ✓ **Blanchardstown**
- ✓ **Bray**
- ✓ **Clarehall**
- ✓ **Cork**
- ✓ **Dun Laoghaire**
- ✓ **Galway**
- ✓ **Gorey**

- ✓ **Grafton St**
- ✓ **Inchicore**
- ✓ **Kerry**
- ✓ **Letterkenny**
- ✓ **Limerick**
- ✓ **Maynooth**
- ✓ **Naas**
- ✓ **Ongar**

- ✓ **Shannon**
- ✓ **Sligo**
- ✓ **Stillorgon**
- ✓ **Tinahely**
- ✓ **Walkinstown**
- ✓ **Waterford**