

NET CARE



Treated bed nets have a relatively long shelf life in their factory packaging. But once unwrapped, the insecticide is only effective for about six months. So keep it bundled up until you arrive at your destination.

While some hotels, even modest ones, may have some fittings for hanging mosquito nets, don't count on it. Boldness and creativity may be necessary. Do not be afraid to move furniture around to take advantage of light fixtures and other ceiling fittings for net hanging. You should also come equipped with a small gadget kit that includes screwable hooks, nails, string, safety pins, and the handyman's eternal friend, duct tape. In a pinch, the light weight of bed nets means that dental floss can even be pressed into service. If all else fails, you can even drag your mattress under a table or desk, draping the net over top.

Obviously, it's a good idea to avoid tearing holes in the net, although the insecticide will compensate for them. And no matter how grubby your net becomes, try to avoid washing it, except immediately prior to insecticide application.

The nets should be renewed with insecticide after six months. Unfortunately, while Canadian regulations allow sales of treated nets, they ban distribution of pyrethroid solutions. The best idea is to find someone who needs a net in the country you're visiting and hand yours over to them when you head home.

Alternately, when travelling outside Canada you may find stores that carry pyrethroid solutions specially packaged for renewing the protection in nets.

SPREADING THE BENEFITS



A portion of the sale price from the HealthBridge treated net goes to development programmes. HealthBridge is a non-profit, non-governmental organization working with partners world-wide to improve health and health equity through research, policy and action.

While Canadians' attention understandably focuses on dramatic illnesses such as the Ebola virus, malaria remains the major health threat to much of the world's population. At its height, the Ebola outbreak in Zaire

killed 250 people over six months. Malaria takes 5,000 lives in Africa every day. Through a programme known as Net Gain for Africa, HealthBridge has pioneered research into treated mosquito nets and developed net distribution and marketing programmes in Africa.

SUPPORT FOR HEALTHBRIDGE



The work of HealthBridge is made possible through the generous contributions of people like you. Your donation does make a difference. HealthBridge is a registered charity and will issue receipts for income tax purposes for donations over \$10. All gifts are greatly appreciated. Donations can safely be made through our web site.



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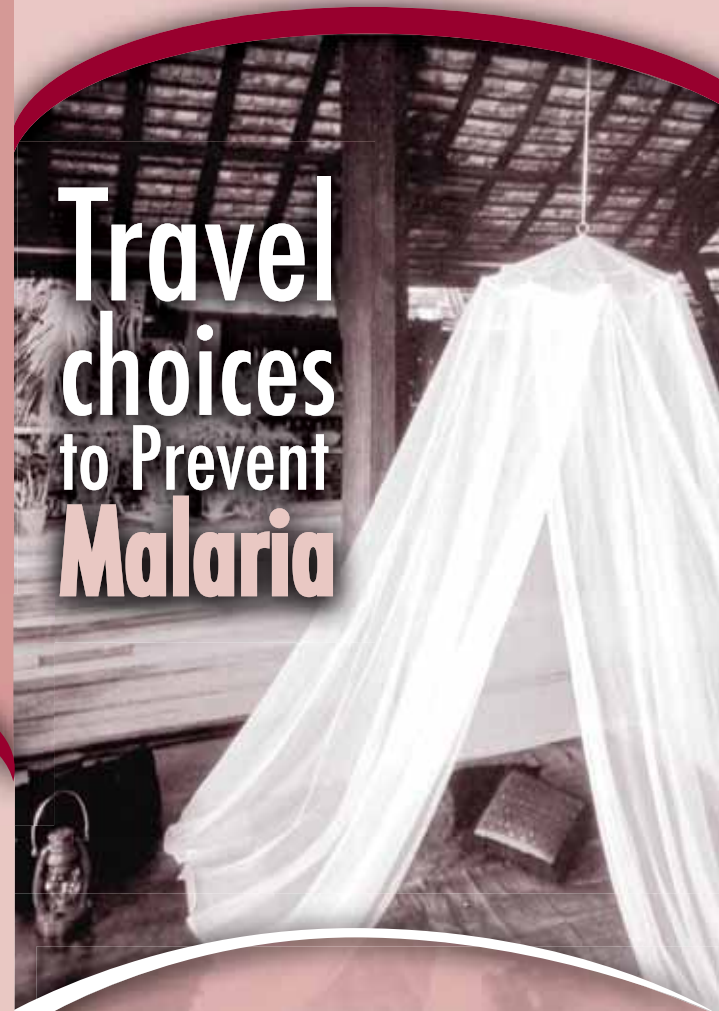
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Net Benefits



Travel
choices
to Prevent
Malaria



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THE HOLIDAY KILLER



Most Canadians don't think much about malaria. But it's far from being a minor travel irritation like jet lag or upset stomachs. Every year upwards of 500 million people around the world are infected by the mosquito borne parasite. The lucky ones may only suffer a terrible, flu-like illness. But for at least two million people annually, malaria brings death.

Being from a malaria-free country like Canada offers travellers no special protection. Just the opposite in fact. Our lack of prior exposure makes malaria the number one life-threatening infection for travellers to the tropics. Canada has one of the highest per capita rates of imported malaria among developed countries.



HOW MALARIA TRAVELS

Usually, people get malaria by being bitten by an infected female Anopheles mosquito. Only Anopheles mosquitoes can transmit malaria and they must have been infected through a previous blood meal taken on an infected person.

Many of the places Anopheles calls home are popular vacation spots including: Central America, northern South America, Africa, Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, as well as parts of Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

The good news about Anopheles is that it keeps limited dining hours, usually only biting people for its meal of blood between dusk and dawn. That means the mosquitoes interfering with the daytime view on sight-seeing excursions are not likely to give you malaria. As well, Anopheles isn't generally found in areas above 2,500 metres.



THE DEADLY CYCLE

Centuries of evolving new ways around the human body's defenses have made malaria parasites formidable foes. Once one enters a person's bloodstream through a mosquito bite, the parasite quickly makes its way to the liver. Upon arrival, it turns the liver into an incubator for breeding a parasite army.

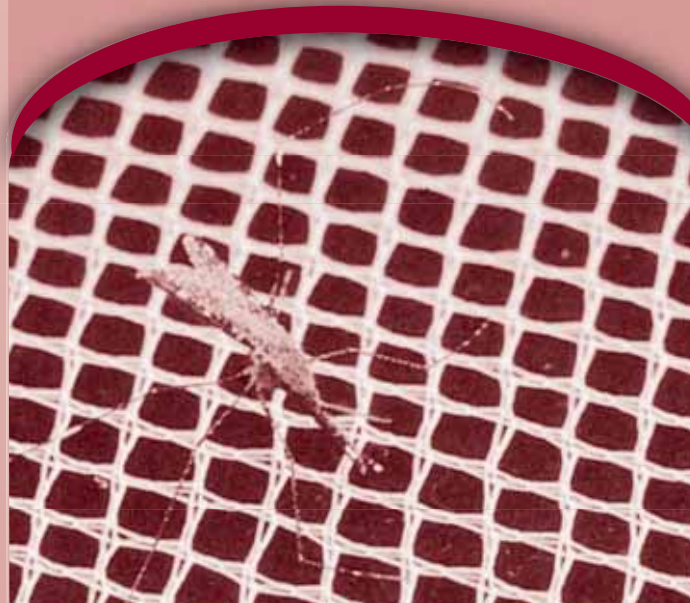
It can take as little as one to four weeks or as long as a year for the parasite force to return to the bloodstream and begin its nasty work. The parasites start by attacking blood cells.

There are four types of malaria parasites. The most dangerous is falciparum, a fast and lethal worker. Widely found in Africa, it is the only malaria parasite that attacks the brain. Tourists have been known to head off sight-seeing in the morning feeling slightly ill only to lapse into convulsion by the afternoon and die from a falciparum infection by evening. It is vital for travellers to malarial areas to take appropriate antimalarial medication, and to immediately see a doctor if they develop fever which malaria almost always causes.



PROTECT YOURSELF

Unlike some tropical diseases, there is no vaccine against malaria. However, about two months before you leave Canada, see a doctor about antimalarial medication. Many travellers are going to low risk areas and do not need antimalarial drugs. If you are travelling to a high risk area, antimalarial drugs will greatly reduce the risk of infection but they won't completely eliminate it. To be effective they must be taken exactly as prescribed.



STOP THE BITING



Beyond taking drugs, if appropriate, the best defense against malaria is to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. Many of the steps to do that are just common sense: sleep in air conditioned or well screened rooms if available, use insect repellents, wear pants and long sleeved shirts in the evenings and at night. And since Anopheles bites when most people sleep, mosquito nets are a very important tool.



THE BETTER BED NET

No mosquito net can guarantee you will not be bitten however, nets treated with insecticides can greatly reduce the risk. Pyrethroid insecticides, originally obtained from chrysanthemum blooms, are biodegradable and relatively benign for humans. However they are extremely toxic for the Anopheles mosquito, adding a powerful chemical barrier to the net's physical block. The insecticide not only kills mosquitoes but it literally drives others out of the room. Health Canada says the use of treated nets is "strongly recommended" for anyone sleeping in a room that isn't air conditioned or well screened.

Treated bed nets have several positive side effects. They are safe for pregnant women and children. And since pyrethroids kill a wide variety of insects other than mosquitoes — including bedbugs and cockroaches — wrapping your pillow or mattress with a treated net in the evening before you sleep can greatly reduce the number of unwanted creatures sharing your bed.