

Malaria

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease caused by a parasite transmitted through a mosquito bite. It is spread by the female anopheles mosquito. High temperatures and large amounts of water are conducive to ideal conditions in which the mosquito can breed.

While malaria is endemic throughout Mozambique, there is a low to moderate risk of being exposed to it while in the city of Maputo. However, visitors are recommended to adhere to the 4 principals of malaria protection whenever possible:

- Be **aware** of the risk, the incubation period and the main symptoms
- Avoid being **bitten** by mosquitoes
- Take anti malarial drugs (**chemoprophylaxis**) when appropriate, to prevent infection from developing into clinical disease
- Seek **diagnosis** and treatment immediately.

The best prevention against malaria is to not be bitten by the mosquitoes. The *anopheles* mosquitoes feed mainly from dusk until dawn so it is during this time that precautions need to be taken in order to prevent being bitten. These can include:

- Wearing light **colored clothing** that covers most of the body, especially in the evenings and early mornings
- Sleeping under **bed nets** at night, especially effective if they have been treated with insecticide.
- Correct use of **insect repellent**. DEET is the most effective repellent that can be used on both skin and clothing. The DEET concentration varies between 10% and 35%, depending on the product. The approximate duration of protection depends on the DEET concentration. Follow the instructions on the product label as to how often to apply it. Remember to reapply if outdoors longer than expected or after swimming or excessive sweating.
- Taking **antimalarial drugs** to kill the parasites (follow the advice given by your local health provider as to when to start and stop taking the medication as it can differ depending on which medication is used).

The earlier the disease is detected, the less likely the risk of complications and possible fatal consequences.

When returning home, should there be any symptoms, to indicate possible malaria, a diagnostic malaria test will need to be done. These symptoms would include fever, flu-like illness, including rigors and chills, headaches, muscle aches and tiredness. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may also sometimes be present. Contact your local health care provider immediately should any of these symptoms be present, and inform them you have been in a malaria area. Should the result be positive to malaria, medication needs to be prescribed by a doctor.

For more information see the CDC website: www.cdc.gov/malaria.