A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Happy and Healthy Trails to You

Malaria Surveillance — United States, 2007

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Malaria is a disease spread from the bite of a certain mosquito. Millions of people die each year from the disease, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. Fortunately, in the United States, malaria is well-controlled, but cases still occur.

Dr. Paul Arguin is a Medical Epidemiologist with CDC's National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne, and Enteric Diseases, and he's joining us today to discuss malaria in the United States. Welcome to the show, Paul.

[Dr. Arguin] Good morning.

[Dr. Gaynes] Paul, how many cases of malaria actually occur in the United States?

[Dr. Arguin] We get approximately 1500 cases per year in the United States.

[Dr. Gaynes] And are these cases being acquired inside the United States or by persons travelling abroad?

[Dr. Arguin] The overwhelming majority of these cases were acquired abroad. We only had one case acquired domestically last year.

[Dr. Gaynes] Paul, what areas of the world have the highest risk of malaria for U.S. travelers?

[Dr. Arguin] We track this every year. The highest risk occurs for U.S travelers in parts of West Africa, but certainly all of sub-Saharan Africa is a risk for malaria. Another part of the world that is a relatively high risk for U.S. travelers is certain countries in the Pacific Ocean, such as, for example, Papua, New Guinea.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, what should a person do if he or she is planning to travel to one of these areas?

[Dr. Arguin] They need to go and see their doctor several weeks in advance - either their own personal physician or a travel medicine specialist. At that visit, the doctor or nurse who's seeing them will provide them advice about risk for malaria in the countries that they're traveling to and give them some specific prevention measures they can use, including the use of insect repellents,

sleeping under an insecticide-treated bed net, and taking an appropriate medication before, during, and after travel.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the symptoms of malaria, and what should a person do if they suspect they have the disease?

[Dr. Arguin] The symptoms of malaria are not subtle. It starts with a very high fever; shivering, shaking chills; and as it progresses, it can affect other parts of the body, including the lungs and the brain, resulting in things, such as difficulty breathing or coma. Should they have onset of these symptoms, they should immediately go to an emergency room and be sure and tell the provider that they see there that they had recently traveled to a country where malaria occurs and to please check them for malaria.

[Dr. Gaynes] Paul, where can listeners get more information about preventing malaria?

[Dr. Arguin] They can go to the CDC malaria website which can be found at www.cdc.gov/malaria.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks Paul. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Paul Arguin about ways to avoid getting malaria.

Remember, if you plan on traveling to a place where malaria occurs, see your healthcare provider beforehand and make sure you take any preventative medicines, as prescribed.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC.*

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.