



Ministry of Health

Health Advisory on Malaria - January 8, 2017

Recent Cases of Malaria in Jamaica

Jamaica has to date identified two (2) **IMPORTED** cases of Malaria since the beginning of 2017. On January 5, 2017, there was one (1) confirmed case reported by the National Public Health Laboratory. On January 6, 2017, there was another reported case by a private laboratory. Case investigation commenced immediately and the persons admitted to hospital. The repeat blood smear for the second patient showed negative at the National Public Health Laboratory. Blood will be drawn nightly for at least three nights to determine the status of this patient.

In 2016, there were three (3) incidence cases of confirmed **imported** malaria in two (2) persons. One person visited Gabon twice and returned to Jamaica with malaria on both occasions.

Nationality & Travel History of the cases

The first case is a Jamaican National who was living in Ghana and returned to Jamaica in November 2016. The second case is a male, Indian National who arrived in Jamaica in March 2016.

Ministry of Health Response

Following the first confirmed case on January 5, 2017, the Ministry of Health has carried out the following:

- a. Detailed case investigation

- b. Admission of patients to hospital with mosquito isolation and treatment.
- c. Vector control:
 - i. Search for *Anopheles mosquito* breeding sites revealed 3 sites 700 to 1000 metres from the first person's home.
 - ii. Three consecutive night fogging Blitz in close proximity to the patients home, which will be repeated weekly for three cycles.
- d. Community fever surveillance for early detection in the event there was spread:

	2017/01/06	2017/01/07	Total
Number of Households Visited	45	134	179
Number of Household Interviewed	45	111	156
Number of Fever Cases Identified	10	7	17
Number of Blood samples taken	11	20	31
Number of blood samples positive for malaria	0	Not yet tested	0/11 tested

Background

Malaria in humans is caused by five species of a protozoal parasite belonging to the genus *Plasmodium*. These are *P. falciparum*, *P. vivax*, *P. ovale*, *P. malariae* and *P. knowlesi*. The malaria parasite is transmitted to humans by the infected bite of female *Anopheles* mosquitoes called "**malaria vectors.**" There are more than 30 anopheline species that transmit malaria and *Anopheles albimanus* is considered the principal vector for transmission in Jamaica.

The World Health Organization (WHO), in the World Malaria Report of 2016, reported that there were 91 countries with ongoing malaria transmission. According to this report, there were approximately 212 million new cases of malaria worldwide in 2015 (range 148–304 million) with the WHO African Region accounting for most of global cases of malaria (90%), followed by the South-East

Asia Region (7%) and the Eastern Mediterranean Region (2%). The endemic countries are Africa, the Americas, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, South East Asia and the Western Pacific.

Symptoms of Malaria

The symptoms of Malaria include fever, chills, headache, sweats, fatigue, nausea and vomiting. Some population groups are at considerably higher risk of contracting malaria, and developing severe disease, than others. These include pregnant women, infants, children under five years of age, patients with HIV/AIDS, as well as non-immune migrants, mobile populations and travelers.

History of Malaria in Jamaica

Jamaica eliminated malaria after the successful Malaria Eradication Campaign of 1958/62 with the last endemic case being in 1961. Jamaica has been able to prevent re-introduction by public health surveillance, identifying imported cases and putting in place the necessary control measures to prevent local spread even in the presence of imported malaria.

In 2006, after 44 years of “eradication”, Jamaica had an outbreak of *Plasmodium falciparum*. An emergency response was launched with the key strategies of early detection, prompt treatment of cases, vector control, public education and intersectoral collaboration. This led to the successful re-elimination of Malaria in 2009. In 2012, Jamaica was re-instated on the Official Register of areas where Malaria eradication has been achieved.

Prevention

Malaria prevention medications are available in Jamaica. You should start taking anti-malarial drugs before you travel, take them during your travels, and continue to take them for up to one month after your return.

Travel Advisory

The Ministry of Health is urging Jamaicans to be cautious when travelling to areas affected with Malaria. You should contact your physician or Health Centre before traveling to malaria endemic areas, also If you develop any of the symptoms listed above after returning from these affected territories.

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