



YELLOW FEVER

What is yellow fever?

Yellow fever is caused by the bite of a mosquito infected with the flavivirus yellow fever virus. “Yellow” refers to the jaundice (yellow skin or eyes) of some patients. In the 18th and 19th century, yellow fever epidemics repeatedly occurred in the United States when ships brought infected mosquitoes from overseas. Today, yellow fever is endemic to tropical and subtropical regions of South America and Africa.

Who gets yellow fever?

People of all ages can get yellow fever if they are exposed to infected mosquitoes. People who travel to areas where yellow fever is common, such as areas in Africa and South America, are at increased risk. Yellow fever is a very rare illness in U.S. travelers.

How is yellow fever spread?

Infected *Aedes aegypti* (yellow fever mosquito) mosquitoes spread this disease to people. In the United States, these mosquitoes are not normally found north of the Carolinas. Mosquitoes get yellow fever virus by feeding on infected primates (human or non-human).

What are the symptoms of yellow fever?

Most people infected with yellow fever will either have no symptoms or mild symptoms and completely recover. Initial symptoms include the sudden onset of fever, chills, severe headache, back pain, general body aches, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, and weakness. Most symptomatic people recover within one week. However, one out of seven people with initial symptoms will develop a more severe form of the disease after a brief period of remission. Symptoms of severe disease include high fever, jaundice, bleeding, shock, and organ failure. Among those with severe yellow fever disease, 30% to 60% die.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The time from mosquito bite to feeling sick ranges from three to six days.

How is yellow fever diagnosed?

Health care providers diagnose yellow fever based on travel history, symptoms, and results from blood tests.

What is the treatment for yellow fever?

There is no treatment for yellow fever, but an effective vaccine is available to prevent disease. Rest, fluids, and over-the-counter pain medications may relieve some symptoms in infected people. Avoid aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (ibuprofen or naproxen) to reduce the risk of bleeding. If you have yellow fever, prevent mosquito bites during the first week of illness. During the first week, uninfected mosquitoes can get the virus from your blood and pass it to uninfected people.



Should an infected person be excluded from work or school?

An infected person does not need to be excluded from work or school.

What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of yellow fever?

The most important way to prevent your chances of developing yellow fever is to prevent mosquito bites and get vaccinated if traveling to or living in areas with yellow fever. Take these additional steps:

- Repair any tears or rips in window screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home. Use air conditioning if available.
- Recycle old tires, which are perfect habitats for mosquito larvae.
- Tip and toss containers that are holding water. Turn containers and wheelbarrows over, so that they cannot collect water. Empty water from tarps that are covering items like boats, mulch, dirt, etc.
- Change the water in bird baths.
- Use netting over strollers, playpens, etc.
- Consider using EPA-registered mosquito repellents and apply them according to the product label.
- Wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- When travelling overseas:
 - Check for travel health notices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
 - Pack the following items: EPA-registered mosquito repellents, long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and clothing and gear treated with 0.5% permethrin.
 - Choose hotel or lodging with air conditioning and window and door screens.
 - Talk to your health care provider about the yellow fever vaccine. The vaccine is recommended for people 9 months or older and who are travelling to or living in areas at risk for yellow fever virus in Africa and South America. For most, a single dose of the vaccine provides long-lasting protection.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

Yellow Fever, <https://www.cdc.gov/yellowfever/index.html>

Yellow Fever Vaccine, <https://www.cdc.gov/yellowfever/vaccine/vaccine-recommendations.html>

Yellow Fever and Travel, <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/yellow-fever>

Travel Health Notices, <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>