



## **MALARIA FACT SHEET**

### **WHAT IS MALARIA?**

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease caused by a parasite that commonly infects a certain type of mosquito which feeds on humans. About 1,700 cases of malaria are diagnosed in the United States each year. Almost all are in travelers and immigrants returning from parts of the world where malaria transmission occurs, mainly sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

### **HOW DO YOU GET MALARIA?**

- From the bite of a mosquito that is infected with the malaria parasite
- Through blood transfusion, organ transplant, or the shared use of needles or syringes contaminated with blood.
- From a mother to her unborn infant before or during delivery (“congenital” malaria).

### **SYMPTOMS**

For most people, symptoms begin 10 days to 4 weeks after infection, although a person may feel ill as early as 7 days or as late as 1 year later.

- Fever
- Chills
- Sweats
- Headaches
- Nausea and vomiting
- Body aches
- Tiredness

Severe malaria occurs when infections are complicated by serious organ failures or abnormalities in the patient's blood or metabolism.

### **TREATMENT**

Malaria is treated with antimalarial drugs. Treatment should be started early before the illness becomes serious. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

### **PREVENTION**

If traveling to an area with malaria, see your healthcare provider 4-6 weeks before travel to determine if you need to take malaria medicine. In addition, take the following measures to avoid mosquito bites such as:

Dump any standing water

Use insect repellent

When possible, wear long sleeves and long pants for additional protection

Use window and door screens. Repair any holes.

### **DPHD EFFORTS**

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware Public Health District (DPHD). The DPHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.