

06/29/2023

**NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take action to prevent or control a notifiable condition. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

Identified Locally Acquired Malaria Cases in Florida and Texas

Action Requested:

Be aware of ongoing investigations of locally acquired mosquito transmitted *Plasmodium vivax* malaria cases. Within the last two months, four cases of malaria have been identified in Florida and one case in Texas, they show no evidence of being linked across states. All cases have received treatment and are improving, mosquito surveillance and control measures have been implemented and are ongoing in the affected areas.

Clinical manifestations of malaria include:

- Fever, chills, headache, myalgias and fatigue
- Possible nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
- Normally symptoms begin 10 days to 4 weeks after infection but can range 7 days to 1 year

Recommendations

- Consider malaria diagnosis in any individual who presents with a fever of unknown origin, regardless of international travel history, particularly if they have been to areas with recent locally acquired malaria cases.
- Obtain a travel history and consider malaria in a symptomatic person who traveled to an affected area with malaria in the weeks to months leading to symptom onset.
- Malaria is a medical emergency. If not diagnosed and treated promptly, illness may progress to life threatening stages. Please refer to the CDC diagnosis and treatment guidelines provided in the references.
 - Order both, a microscopic examination of thin and thick blood smears, and a rapid diagnostic test (RDT) if available, to diagnose as soon as possible.
 - If either test are positive and species determination is not available, antimalarial treatment effective against chloroquine-resistant *P. falciparum* must begin immediately.
 - IV artesunate is the first-line drug for treatment of severe malaria cases and is FDA approved. Please refer to the CDC guidance provided in the references.

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- Species determination is important because *P. vivax* and *P. ovale* can stay dormant in the liver which requires additional anti-relapse treatment.
- Suspected or confirmed **locally acquired** malaria is immediately notifiable to Thurston County Public Health and Social Services.
- Travel associated malaria is reportable by healthcare provider or facility to Thurston County Public Health and Social Services within 3 business days and reportable by laboratories within 2 business days.

Background:

Malaria is a serious and potentially fatal disease which is transmitted by the bite of an infected female anopheline mosquito. Rarely, malaria is spread congenitally, blood transfusion, organ transplantation or unsafe needle sharing practices. Washington State Department of Health reports annually receiving 20 to 40 cases of malaria, none are normally locally acquired. Almost all United States malaria cases are internationally acquired, thus making locally acquired malaria infections a public health emergency.

Resources:

- CDC's Health Advisory 06/26/2023: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2023/han00494.asp>
- CDC's Malaria Diagnosis and Treatment Guideline:
https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/diagnosis_treatment/clinicians1.html
- CDC's Malaria Diagnosis and Treatment Algorithm:
https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/resources/pdf/Malaria_Managment_Algorithm_202208.pdf
- CDC's Severe Malaria IV Artesunate Treatment:
https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/diagnosis_treatment/artesunate.html
- CDC Malaria on Call Clinician: <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/contact.html>

THANK YOU FOR REPORTING

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE UPDATE

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION SECTION
THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
412 LILLY RD NE
OLYMPIA, WA, 98506-5132
DISEASE REPORTING: (360)786-5470
WWW.THURSTONCOUNTYWA.GOV/PHSS



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TO REPORT A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION IN THURSTON COUNTY	
Voice mail for reporting non-immediately reportable conditions (24 hours a day) : Reporting a Notifiable Condition (thurstoncountywa.gov)	Phone: 360-786-5470 Fax: 360-867-2601
Day time immediately reportable conditions – Call detailed information to the 24-hour Notifiable Condition Reporting Line at 360-786-5470. Messages are picked up hourly. If a call back can't wait call 360-867-2500 and ask staff to locate a Communicable Disease staff.	Phone: 360-786-5470
After hours immediately and 24-hour reportable conditions or a public health emergency	Call 1-800-986-9050
No one is available with Thurston County Public Health and condition is immediately notifiable	1-877-539-4344

Communicable Disease Updates are posted online at: [Communicable Disease Updates \(thurstoncountywa.gov\)](http://thurstoncountywa.gov)