

Yellow Fever

Frequently Asked Questions

What is yellow fever?

Yellow fever is a disease caused by a virus. People get infected with the virus after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

Who gets yellow fever?

People who travel to areas where there are infected mosquitoes or other people or monkeys sick with yellow fever.

Where is yellow fever found?

The disease occurs in tropical areas of Africa and South America.

What are the symptoms of yellow fever?

Early symptoms of yellow fever may include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Backache

As the disease continues, symptoms may include:

- Slow, weak pulse
- Bleeding gums
- Blood in the urine
- Jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)

How is yellow fever diagnosed?

If a health care provider suspects yellow fever, samples of the patient's blood will be examined.

Is there a treatment for yellow fever?

There is no specific treatment for yellow fever and most people get better on their own. The recovery period may be long. People with yellow fever should rest and drink plenty of fluids.

How can yellow fever be prevented?

A vaccine exists to prevent yellow fever. One dose will provide protection for about 10 years. If a person is at continued risk of yellow fever infection, a booster dose is needed every 10 years. Adults and children over the age of 9 months can take this vaccine. This vaccine is only given at special yellow fever vaccination centers. Ask your local health department for the location of these centers.

The yellow fever vaccine has few side effects. Less than 5% of people receiving the vaccine will get a mild headache, muscle pain, or other minor symptoms 5 to 10 days after vaccination.

There are four groups of people who should not receive the yellow fever vaccine (unless the risk of yellow fever disease is greater than the small risk associated with the vaccine).

- Children under 6 months of age

- Pregnant women
- People allergic to eggs
- People with weak immune systems

These people should get a waiver letter or delay travel to an area where yellow fever cases are occurring.

Follow these steps to reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes:

- Wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors at dusk or dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use an EPA-registered insect repellent such as those with DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. These products can be used on skin or clothing. Choose a product that provides protection for the amount of time spent outdoors. Permethrin is another type of insect repellent. It can only be used on clothing. ALWAYS follow the directions on the product label.
- Sleep in screened-in areas or under protective nets.

Mosquitoes begin to breed in any puddle or standing water that lasts for more than 4 days. Get rid of mosquito breeding sites around the home.

- Clean out gutters and drains
- Dispose of old tires
- Drain standing water from pool covers and ditches
- Remove all containers that hold water
- Maintain pools, spas and saunas properly
- Change birdbath water every several days
- Make sure all windows and doors have screens and that all screens are in good condition.

Where can I get more information on yellow fever?

- Your health care provider
- Your local health department
- NJ Department of Health www.nj.gov/health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/yellowfever

This information is intended for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation with a health care professional. Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Revised 10/18