

Preventing and reducing malaria transmission

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Recently, UK P&I Club Members reported two cases of death and two cases of serious illness (three months in hospital each) due to malaria. These cases arose despite the crew member being on medication to prevent the disease. It was later found that the crew members either did not have the correct medication, for the countries they were travelling to, or they were unsure about the correct dose they should be taking.

What is malaria?

Malaria is a life-threatening disease that is preventable and curable with early diagnosis and treatment. It is not contagious, but it is an infectious disease spread through infected female mosquitos, carrying one of several malaria microorganisms.

Most malaria cases take place in sub-Saharan Africa, however, regions such as South-East Asia, Eastern Mediterranean, Western Pacific and the Americas are also at risk.

“In 2017, there were an estimated 219 million cases of malaria in 90 countries” and deaths caused by malaria reached 435,000

WHO Malaria Fact Sheet

The dangers

If malaria is diagnosed and treated early, it is usually completely curable. However, if left untreated, it may lead to complications and, potentially, death. Some complications that can arise include: kidney failure, liver failure, acute respiratory distress, circulatory collapse, secondary infections and more.

The severity of the complications of malaria mean that it is imperative for vessels travelling within, or close to, the endemic regions to carry prophylaxis (preventative treatment).

Signs and symptoms

Malaria usually has ‘flu-like’ symptoms, which include:

- High fever
- Chills
- Sweating
- Myalgia (muscle pain)
- Headaches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Jaundice

Prevention methods

- Carrying the correct medication for applicable geographic area on board in adequate quantities
- Mosquitoes are attracted by light and areas with stagnant water – care should be taken to ensure there is no stagnant water anywhere on a vessel, and that the amount of light is reduced, where safe to do so
- Ensure that no crew members sleep on deck
- Apply insecticides in cabins
- Use mosquito repellent sprays
- Avoid exposing skin
- Use mosquito nets that have been treated with an effective insecticide (on doors, windows, to sleep under, and over ventilation holes), especially at night

Information obtained from Med Solutions’ Malaria Overview and the World Health Organisation’s Malaria fact sheet.

CREW HEALTH PROGRAMME

The Club was the first to launch a crew health scheme in 1996 due to increasing crew illness claims and a lack of accountability of clinics. Since 1996, the Crew Health programme has become one of the Club's leading loss prevention initiatives. The aim of the programme is to reduce the volume and value of crew illness claims which are caused by a pre-existing illnesses or disease. These underlying conditions often impact on the crew member's fitness for service and can endanger not only the health of the seafarer but also the onboard safety of other crew.

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Sophia joined Thomas Miller in 1992 and from 1994 worked as a claims handler dealing mainly with French and Spanish Members. In 2004, Sophia became the Crew Health Programme Director. Sophia has undertaken a large number of clinic audits, implemented the standard medical form and clinic guidelines. She has also lead the scheme through the largest period of growth and development with a doubling of approved clinic facilities and a four fold member increase. Sophia is a Director of Thomas Miller & Co. Ltd.

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Saidul Alom joined Crew Health from the European Region Service Team in 2004. Saidul provides administrative support to the Crew Health programme and is responsible for liaison with the approved clinics on financial billing matters and ensuring prompt payment of all clinic fees

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Stuart joined Thomas Miller in 1998 as a claims trainee for UK P&I Club's Greek Members. In April 2005 Stuart joined Crew Health as the Team Administrator. Stuart is responsible for co-ordination of Member entries and administration for the clinic approval process.