

Malaria:

The killer disease

by Hanlie du Plessis

Malaria is a very dangerous illness that kills over a million people every year. You can get it when certain mosquitoes bite you. These mosquitoes are very active between October and May. You must take extra care during these months.

To avoid malaria:

- Do not go near standing water at night
- If you are outside at night, cover your body with clothing
- Apply mosquito repellents like Tabard, Peaceful Sleep or citronella oil on your skin
- Sleep under a bed net to protect you
- Put gauze over windows that are opened at night.

Children and pregnant women must be very careful. Most of the people dying of malaria are young children, under five years old and pregnant women. The body of a pregnant woman cannot fight against malaria like the bodies of other adults. Malaria treatment for a pregnant woman is very difficult.

Malaria can be treated effectively if you go to the doctor or clinic in time. When you have fever, headaches, body pains and a cold shaking feeling it is best to see the doctor immediately. If you wait too long, you will start vomiting and you will become very weak.

The health workers will take blood from you to test. If they say you have malaria you must be treated immediately. They will decide if you need to go to the hospital or give you tablets to take. If they give you tablets, you must listen carefully to the health worker telling you how to drink the tablets. You must take your tablets with food until all the tablets are finished. Go back to the health worker if you do not feel better in three days.

If you have a fever you must drink more fluids like water or milk. You can also use a sponge with cool water to cool your body. Ask the health worker to give you medicine that will help for your fever.

You must go to the hospital immediately if your body start shaking or if you stop urinating. If you think your baby has malaria, do not wait. Take him directly to the hospital for treatment. Babies can easily die from malaria. **UM**