

Although it is very unusual, people aged 60 years and older have an increased chance of the last two reactions. About one in every 45,000 people aged 60 years or older experience YEL-AND, and one in every 83,000 people aged 60 years or older experience YEL-AVD following YF vaccine. Almost all cases of YEL-AND and YEL-AVD have happened in people receiving YF vaccine for the first time.

### What if I cannot have a yellow fever vaccine?

Discuss your situation with a health professional, you may decide not to travel to a YF risk destination. If you cannot have YF vaccine for medical reasons but must travel and need an ICVP, you may be able to get a Medical Letter of Exemption from a health professional. Border or immigration officials usually accept this letter. As you will not be protected against YF infection, you must take particular care to avoid mosquito bites. Ideally you should try to spend as little time as possible in YF risk areas.

### Where can I get more information about yellow fever and the vaccine?

More information is available on our yellow fever factsheet: [travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/18/yellow-fever](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/18/yellow-fever)



### Useful information:

- Travel health advice for countries worldwide: [travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries)
- Mosquito bite prevention: [gov.uk/government/publications/mosquito-bite-avoidance-for-travellers](https://gov.uk/government/publications/mosquito-bite-avoidance-for-travellers)
- YF pre-vaccination checklist: [travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/87/yellow-fever-pre-vaccination-checklist](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/87/yellow-fever-pre-vaccination-checklist)
- YFVC search: [nathnacyfzone.org.uk/search-centres](https://nathnacyfzone.org.uk/search-centres)



# Yellow fever

## INFORMATION FOR TRAVELLERS



### What is yellow fever?

Yellow fever (YF) is a serious illness caused by a virus that can affect monkeys and humans. YF is usually spread by mosquito bites and is not a risk in the United Kingdom (UK) or mainland Europe, but travellers to some tropical countries are at risk. It is very rare in UK travellers, but cases are occasionally reported. Most people who get YF either have no symptoms or a mild illness and fully recover. However, a small number of people develop a serious illness with fever, jaundice (turning yellow), bleeding and organ failure.

There is no specific medicine to treat YF. Most people who develop a serious illness will be admitted to hospital, sometimes into intensive care. 30-60% of people with a serious YF illness will die. Each year, it is thought that there are around 200,000 cases of YF among those living in risk areas; it is likely many cases are not reported.

### Where is yellow fever found?

YF is found in parts of Africa, South and Central America and in Trinidad. To prevent YF spread, some countries require proof that you have had a YF vaccine when you arrive. You can check TravelHealthPro ([travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries)) to find out if there is a risk of YF, or a requirement for proof of YF vaccination at your destination.

## How can I prevent yellow fever?

There are two ways to help prevent YF infection:

- by preventing mosquito bites
- by having a YF vaccine

If you are going to an area with risk of YF you should do both.

## Preventing mosquito bites

Mosquitoes that spread YF usually bite during the daytime, particularly after dawn and before dusk. Taking precautions against mosquito bites day and night helps reduce your risk of YF and other infections spread by mosquitoes, like dengue.

## Reduce your risk of mosquito bites by:

- applying insect repellents, ideally containing 50% DEET (or a suitable alternative if you can't use DEET) - remember to reapply insect repellent regularly
- covering up with clothes as much as possible
- applying an insecticide like permethrin to clothing



(For more information: [travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/38/insect-and-tick-bite-avoidance](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/38/insect-and-tick-bite-avoidance))

## Yellow fever vaccine

The YF vaccine has been used for over 80 years and has a good safety record. However, you must have a careful assessment before having the YF vaccine. The vaccine can only be given in special clinics called Yellow Fever Vaccination Centres (YFVCs) where health professionals have had special training about YF. To find a clinic in the UK, search our website:

[nathnacyfzone.org.uk/search-centres](https://nathnacyfzone.org.uk/search-centres)

Most travellers are protected for life after one YF vaccine; a health professional at a YFVC can advise you about this as very occasionally a second YF vaccine may be recommended.

When you are given a YF vaccine, you will also be given an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) or 'YF certificate'. This is a legal record of your YF vaccine and may be needed to enter some countries. You should carry your ICVP when you travel, keep it safe and make a copy for your records.

If you are having YF vaccine for the first time, it should be given at least 10 days before your trip to give the vaccine time to work and for the ICVP to be accepted by border officials. This ICVP is valid for life. Even if it was written as valid for 10 years (for certificates written before July 2016), it should still be accepted as being valid for life and should not be altered in any way.



**The ICVP is an official record of vaccination**

## Who should get yellow fever vaccine?

A YFVC will advise you if YF vaccine is needed for your trip. Always get advice from a YFVC, even if you have been given information about YF vaccine by your travel agent. Usually, you need a YF vaccine if you are travelling to:

- any destination with a risk of YF
- a destination that requires proof of YF vaccine before entry

## Precautions and contraindications to yellow fever vaccine

Due to rare side effects, some people cannot have YF vaccine, so before having the vaccine, make sure you discuss all your medical conditions and medicines with your YFVC health professional. There is a checklist that they must complete with you. This will help you both decide if the vaccine is suitable for you:

[travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/87/yellow-fever-pre-vaccination-checklist](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/87/yellow-fever-pre-vaccination-checklist)

## What are the risks from yellow fever vaccine?

Most people do not have problems with YF vaccine. As with any vaccine, mild reactions can occur, usually shortly after the vaccine is given and may last for a few days. They can include:

- sore arm (where the vaccine was given)
- head and muscle aches
- mild fever

There are also three types of very rare but serious reactions that may follow YF vaccine:

- a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) usually occurring in people who are allergic to eggs. This happens about once in every 77,000 people who have the vaccine.
- a severe nervous system reaction such as brain inflammation or other serious neurological symptoms. This happens about once in every 125,000 people who have the vaccine. This is called YEL-AND.
- a severe reaction, similar to YF illness, that affects body organs such as the liver, lung, and kidneys. This happens about once in every 333,000 people who have the vaccine. This is called YEL-AVD.