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Imported malaria cases in the United Kingdom in 2018

Public Health England publishes 2018 imported UK malaria cases

Public Health England (PHE) has published details of malaria cases imported into the United Kingdom (UK) in 2018 [1]. In 2018, a total of 1,683 cases of imported malaria were reported. Cases were reported in England (1,597), Scotland (52), Wales (23) and Northern Ireland (11). This number of cases reported for 2018 was 6.1% lower than reported in 2017 (N= 1,792) [1].

There were six UK deaths from malaria reported in 2018. This is the same number as in 2017, 2016 and 2015. They were all due to *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria acquired in Western Africa (3), Middle Africa (1) Africa unspecified (1) and travel region not stated for one other case.

Most cases in 2018 were caused by *P. falciparum*, which is consistent with previous years.

Where a history of chemoprophylaxis (antimalarial medication) was available, 88% had either taken antimalarials incorrectly or not taken them at all.

The full report: [Malaria imported into the United Kingdom 2018: Implications for those advising travellers](#) is available from PHE.

Advice for travellers

Malaria is an almost completely preventable, but potentially fatal illness. Most UK malaria cases are in travellers who did not receive malaria prevention advice before travelling or did not understand or follow advice that was given.

Get advice from your GP, nurse, pharmacist or travel clinic about the malaria risk at your destination before you travel. Take appropriate malaria prevention medication, if recommended, and protect yourself against mosquitoes at all times, particularly at night.

Symptoms of malaria vary but usually include fever, headache, tiredness or muscle aches, similar to flu. You must get urgent medical help if you have symptoms you think might be due to malaria either during your trip or for up to a year after you return home. If malaria is suspected, a same day result malaria blood test is required. Make sure you mention your travel history during the consultation.

Advice on malaria risk in specific countries is available on the TravelHealthPro Country Information Pages.

Resources

- [Insect and tick bite avoidance](#)
- [Malaria in brief](#)
- [PHE Malaria prevention guidelines for travellers from the UK](#)

References

1. [Public Health England. Malaria imported into the United Kingdom: 2018. Implications for those advising travellers. 5 July 2019 \[Accessed 5 July 2019\]](#)