

Yellow Fever Fact Sheet

1. **What is yellow fever?** - Yellow fever is a mosquito-borne viral disease. The disease occurs in certain tropical and subtropical areas. Anyone who is exposed to this virus can develop the disease. The bite of a certain type of mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*, is most often responsible for transmitting the virus.

2. **What are the symptoms of yellow fever?** - Initial symptoms include fever, headache, vomiting and backache. As the disease progresses the pulse slows and weakens and bleeding of the gums and bloody urine occur. Jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin) may also occur. Yellow fever is fatal in approximately 20% - 40% of cases.

3. **How soon do symptoms appear?** - Symptoms occur within three to six days after infection.

4. **Does past infection with yellow fever develop lifelong immunity?** - Yes.

5. **What is the treatment for yellow fever?** - There is no specific treatment for yellow fever. However, yellow fever vaccine is effective and available. People traveling to areas where yellow fever may be present should be immunized.

8. **Who should not receive the yellow fever vaccine?** - Yellow fever vaccine generally has few side effects; fewer than 5% of those vaccinated develop mild headache, muscle pain, or other minor symptoms 5 to 10 days after vaccination. Under almost all circumstances, there are four groups of people who should not receive the vaccine unless the risk of yellow fever disease exceeds the risk associated with the vaccine. If you have one of these conditions, your doctor will be able to help you decide whether you should be vaccinated, delay your travel, or obtain a waiver:

a. Yellow fever vaccine should never be given to infants under 6 months of age due to a risk of viral encephalitis developing in the child. In most cases, vaccination should be deferred until the child is 9 to 12 months of age.

b. Pregnant women should not be vaccinated because of a potential risk that the developing fetus may become infected from the vaccine.

c. Persons allergic to eggs should not receive the vaccine because it is prepared in embryonated eggs. If vaccination of a traveler with a questionable history of egg allergy is considered essential, a skin test for egg allergy may be administered under close medical supervision. (Notify your doctor prior to vaccination if you think that you may be allergic to the vaccine or to egg products.)

d. Persons with an immunosuppressive condition associated with AIDS or HIV infection, or those whose immune system has been altered by either diseases such as leukemia and lymphoma or through drugs and radiation should not receive the vaccine. People with asymptomatic HIV infection may be vaccinated if exposure to yellow fever cannot be avoided.

9. How can yellow fever be prevented?

a. Yellow fever does not occur in the United States. It is found only in certain tropical areas of South America and Africa. Therefore it is only a health issue for travelers. Only certain health care providers (mostly travel medicine experts) are authorized to administer this vaccine. The list of authorized providers is available on the web site of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) listed below. Certain countries require proof of Yellow Fever vaccination or a waiver before persons are permitted entry. Travelers should consult with their provider or visit the CDC or World Health Organization (WHO) web site (<http://www.who.int/ith/en/>).

b. Yellow fever is a mosquito-transmitted infection. Even if someone has been vaccinated against the disease, they should still take precautions to reduce the risk of mosquito bites. These include use of mosquito repellents containing DEET, covering exposed body parts to the degree feasible, and using insecticide impregnated bed nets while sleeping. These measures should reduce the risk of other mosquito-transmitted diseases for which there are no vaccines.

10. How is yellow fever diagnosed? - Yellow fever is diagnosed through a blood test that looks for evidence of the virus or the body's immune response against the infection. These tests are not widely available. Anyone who thinks they may be ill from this disease should seek health care immediately.

11. For more information about yellow fever:

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2008/ch4/yellow-fever.aspx>

This fact sheet provides general information. Please contact your physician and/or veterinarian for specific clinical information related to you or your animal.

March 20, 2013