



# Yellow fever

## What is yellow fever?

Yellow fever is a zoonotic disease (diseases spread from animals to people) caused by a virus. Yellow fever is found in tropical or subtropical areas of Africa, Central and South America. In Canada, yellow fever is found in persons who have travelled to areas of the world where this disease is present.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually occur within three to six days of exposure. Initial symptoms include fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, nausea and vomiting. Jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes) usually develops and may progress during the disease. In severe cases, hemorrhaging (gum bleeding, blood in vomit and stool), kidney and liver failure can occur.

## How is yellow fever spread?

Yellow fever is usually transmitted to persons by being bitten by a female mosquito that has been infected after biting other persons with the disease.

## How is yellow fever diagnosed?

Yellow fever is diagnosed by symptoms, history of exposure and laboratory testing.

## Who is at risk of yellow fever infections?

Persons living or travelling in areas of the world where yellow fever is present may become infected.

## How can yellow fever be prevented?

**Yellow fever vaccination is available for travellers.** Before you travel, seek advice from your health-care provider at least one month before your departure.

### To prevent mosquito bites:

- Use an insect repellent containing DEET;
- Wear light-coloured clothing and long sleeves, pants and socks;
- Sleep in places with screened windows;
- Use mosquito netting containing insect repellent;
- Tuck mosquito netting under mattresses before nightfall.

## A-Z DISEASE FACT SHEETS

### How is yellow fever treated?

If necessary, supportive care and medications can be used to treat yellow fever.

### What is the public health response?

Health-care providers and laboratories must notify cases of yellow fever to Public Health. Public Health staff may interview the health-care provider and patient (or caregivers) to find out how the infection occurred, identify other people at risk of infection, implement control measures and provide other advice.

### Further Information

For additional information, contact your health-care provider, **local Public Health office** or **Tele-Care 811**.

### Useful websites

Public Health Agency of Canada  
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/>

---

Last reviewed December, 2023