

Heathgate Medical Practice

www.heathgatemedicalpractice.co.uk

Malaria Medication

This leaflet has been produced to help you decide which medication you would like to take to prevent malaria. Your choice should be based on your age, general health, possible side effects and the cost of the drug.

This leaflet only lists the most important side effects. For a complete list, we strongly recommend you check the patient information leaflet supplied with the drug. Some antimalarial drugs are more effective in some parts of the world than others. In addition, a medical condition may prevent you from taking certain drugs.

No drug is 100% effective at preventing malaria so it is very important to reduce the chance of an infective mosquito bite as much as possible.

If you are away for a long period of time or out of reach of proper medical attention, it may be worth taking a separate supply of tablets to treat malaria. Malaria symptoms can start anything from about one week to a year after exposure. The symptoms are feeling feverish, backache, diarrhoea, sore throat, headaches and joint pains.

If you develop these symptoms, seek medical attention promptly and if in the UK, tell the Doctor of travel in the past year to malarial areas.

Options

Lariam (mefloquine)

Adults should take one 250mg tablet weekly. Specific enquiries should be made for children depending on weight and age. This drug is not said to be recommended for infants under 24 months. The dose should be taken once weekly after a meal on the same day for a minimum of 6 weeks, starting at least 1 week and up to 2 – 3 weeks before departure and continuing for 4 weeks on return.

The manufacturer advises to avoid pregnancy during and for 3 months after taking the drug. Breast-feeding should also be avoided whilst taking the drug. It should not be taken if you suffer from epilepsy.

It may cause dizziness or a disturbed sense of balance. Lariam should not be taken if you suffer a severe mental illness or other psychiatric disorder. Do not take this drug if you have been diagnosed or you are being treated for an irregular heartbeat. The most commonly reported side effects are nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dizziness, loss of balance, headaches vivid dreams and poor sleep.

Cost - £22.67 per box of 8 tablets plus private prescription fee of £10.00

Doxycycline

Adults should take one 100mg tablet daily started 1 – 2 days before travel and continued for 4 weeks after return. It is not recommended in children under 12 years of age. The dose should be taken with plenty of water in the sitting or standing position at the same time each day. This drug is not suitable for pregnant women and special care is needed with liver problems. It may affect oral contraception. Women may develop a vaginal thrush infection.

Patients suffering headaches, vomiting or blurred vision after taking the drug should seek medical advice.

Doxycycline may cause travelers to sunburn faster than normal and should be taken on a full stomach.

Cost - £9.16 per box of 50 tablets plus private prescription fee of £10.00

Malarone (atovaquone)

Adults should take one tablet daily starting 24 – 48 hours before entering endemic areas and continue for 7 days after leaving the area. (maximum length of time – 28 days). Children who weigh less than 11KG (24 LB) should not be given malarone.

The dose should be taken at the same time each day with food or milk.

The drug should not be taken by pregnant women or by those breast-feeding. Patients suffering from renal failure must speak to their GP before taking the drug.

Patients with liver problems are advised not to take this drug. Side effects include diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pain and headache.

Adult Cost - £39.32 per box of 12 tablets plus private prescription fee of £10.00

Child Cost - £9.77 per box of 12 tablets plus private prescription fee of £10.00

The following drugs do not attract a private prescription fee;

Paludrine (proguanil)

Adults should take two tablets daily after food. This should start at least 24 hours before entering the endemic area and continue for 4 weeks after leaving. There are specific instructions for children of different ages.

This drug is not suitable for patients with severe renal failure. Side effects include gastric upset, skin reactions, hair loss and mouth ulcers.

Cost - £10.78 per box of 98 tablets.

Paludrine / Avloclor Travel Pack (proguanil and chloroquine)

This is a combination travel pack. Two avloclor tablets should be taken once a week on the same day each week. Two paludrine tablets should be taken daily. Tablets should be taken one week before entering the malarious area and continue during your stay and for 4 weeks after leaving the area. Side effects include headaches, skin eruptions, hair loss and blurred vision.

Cost - £12.74 per box of 112 tablets