



# Yellow fever

## The Disease

**Yellow fever** is a viral haemorrhagic infection that is reported in tropical areas of Africa and Central/South America. Transmission occurs in jungle (sylvan) areas where mosquitoes transmit the disease from monkey hosts to other primates or humans AND in urban areas where the *Aedes* mosquito spreads the infection among the human population. In Africa, there is an additional cycle of transmission in savannah regions bordering jungles. The WHO estimates there are 200,000 cases each year leading to 30,000 deaths across 33 African and 14 South/Central American countries.

The incubation period of yellow fever ranges from three to six days and leads to the acute phase characterised by fever, muscle pains, headache, shivers, nausea and vomiting. Treatment is symptomatic. Most infected individuals will then improve, but around 15 per cent will experience a temporary remission (saddle-back fever) then deteriorate, passing into the toxic phase of the illness. Jaundice and bleeding complications such as vomiting blood, bleeding gums and blood-stained urine lead to shock and multiple organ failure. Death rates in this phase range from 20 to 50 per cent and mostly occur 7–10 days after onset.

## Where is it found?

The disease occurs extensively in Africa, South America, and Panama, Trinidad in Central America.

## Risk to travellers

Yellow fever occurs only rarely in travellers however it does present a risk, particularly if the conditions are right: season, duration of travel to endemic area and sub-optimal insect bite avoidance measures. If travelling to a country where Yellow fever is present, travellers should take precautions against insect bites (see Insect Protection in Resources section).

## Vaccination

### Type

- Live attenuated viral vaccine (Stamaril)

### Standard Schedule

- Single dose protects for 10 years (An International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis is required to confirm vaccination)
- Suitable for 9 months of age and over
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women (if infant is under 9 months of age) are advised against getting the vaccine unless travel is unavoidable
- Contraindicated for those individuals who are immunosuppressed, have a thymus disorder or who have anaphylaxis to eggs
- Precautions to be discussed with prescribing doctor: aged 60+years who have never received YF vaccine.



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**Contraindications:** Should not be administered to individuals who have previously experienced a serious reaction to this vaccine or who are known to be hypersensitive to any of the vaccine components.

### Level of protection

- High level of protection – almost 100%

### Potential side effects

- Redness, swelling and pain at the injection site.
- Swelling of glands under arms.
- Seven to 10 days after vaccination, a fever with stiff joints, tiredness, muscle pain and headache may be experienced.

People are requested to remain at the clinic under observation for 30 minutes after administration of the Yellow fever vaccine.

As with all vaccines, there is a small risk of allergic reaction.

**More information on Yellow fever is available during your pre-travel consultation with Travelvax. Call 1300 360 164 for the location of the clinic nearest to you.**