

Malaria (*Plasmodium spp.*)

1995 Case Definition*

Clinical Description

Signs and symptoms are variable; however, most patients experience fever. In addition to fever, common associated symptoms include headache, back pain, chills, sweats, myalgia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and cough. Untreated *Plasmodium falciparum* infection can lead to coma, renal failure, pulmonary edema, and death. The diagnosis of malaria should be considered for any person who has these symptoms and who has traveled to an area in which malaria is endemic. Asymptomatic parasitemia can occur among persons who have been long-term residents of areas in which malaria is endemic.

Laboratory Criteria for Diagnosis: Demonstration of malaria parasites in blood films.

Case Classification

Confirmed: An episode of microscopically confirmed malaria parasitemia in any person (symptomatic or asymptomatic) diagnosed in the United States, regardless of whether the person experienced previous episodes of malaria while outside the country.

Comment

A subsequent attack experienced by the same person but caused by a different *Plasmodium* species is counted as an additional case. A subsequent attack experienced by the same person and caused by the same species in the United States may indicate a relapsing infection or treatment failure caused by drug resistance.

Blood smears from questionable cases should be referred to the National Malaria Repository, CDC, for confirmation of the diagnosis.

Cases also are classified according to the following World Health Organization categories:

Autochthonous:

Indigenous: Malaria acquired by mosquito transmission in an area where malaria is a regular occurrence.

Introduced: Malaria acquired by mosquito transmission from an imported case in an area where malaria is not a regular occurrence.

Imported: Malaria acquired outside a specific area (e.g., the United States and its territories).

Induced: Malaria acquired through artificial means (e.g., blood transfusion, common syringes, or malariotherapy).

Relapsing: Renewed manifestation (i.e., of clinical symptoms and/or parasitemia) of malarial infection that is separated from previous manifestations of the same infection by an interval greater than any interval resulting from the normal periodicity of the paroxysms.

Cryptic: An isolated case of malaria that cannot be epidemiologically linked to additional cases.

*Source: http://www.cdc.gov/epo/dphsi/casedef/print/malaria_current.htm