Malaria In Academic City

## What Is Malaria ?

Malaria is an acute febrile illness caused by Plasmodium parasites, transmitted through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. It primarily affects tropical countries and is preventable and curable if diagnosed and treated promptly. The disease is not contagious and is spread exclusively through mosquito bites. There are five species of parasites that can cause malaria in humans, with Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax posing the greatest threat.

## Causes of Malaria In Academic City

Malaria is prevalent in Academic City, primarily due to the dense vegetation surrounding the school premises, particularly around the hostel area. The abundance of bushes and foliage creates ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes, especially during the rainy seasons when stagnant water accumulates, further exacerbating the risk of malaria transmission.

The absence of mosquito control devices on campus exacerbates the malaria risk. Additionally, classrooms provided for post-class and late-night studying lack air conditioning and feature large windows. Closing these windows to mitigate mosquito entry would result in discomfort due to the heat, while leaving them open increases the likelihood of mosquito infiltration.

## Symptoms of Malaria

Malaria symptoms typically manifest in stages and can vary in severity. Here's an overview:

1. **Early Symptoms (Prodromal Phase)**:
    - Fever: Often the first and most common symptom, it may come and go in cycles.
    - Chills: Usually accompany the fever and can be severe.
    - Headaches: Often intense and may be accompanied by body aches.
    - Fatigue: Feeling very tired or weak is common.
    - Sweating: Profuse sweating, particularly during fever episodes.
2. **Paroxysm (Acute Phase)**:
    - During this phase, fever becomes more pronounced and occurs in cycles, usually every 24 to 48 hours, depending on the type of malaria parasite.
    - Fever spikes can be accompanied by severe chills and sweating.
3. **Complications (Severe Malaria)**:
    - If left untreated or in cases of severe infection, malaria can progress to life-threatening complications, such as:
        - Cerebral Malaria: Severe malaria affecting the brain, leading to seizures, confusion, coma, and neurological damage.

- Severe Anemia: Destruction of red blood cells, leading to fatigue, weakness, and potentially organ damage.
- Organ Failure: Malaria can affect multiple organs, including the kidneys, liver, and lungs, leading to organ failure.
- Respiratory Distress: Fluid accumulation in the lungs, causing difficulty breathing.
- Hypoglycemia: Low blood sugar levels, leading to weakness, confusion, and loss of consciousness.
- Jaundice: Yellowing of the skin and eyes due to liver dysfunction.

It's essential to note that malaria symptoms can mimic those of other illnesses, making diagnosis challenging without proper testing. If you experience symptoms suggestive of malaria, especially if you've been in malaria-endemic areas, it's crucial to seek medical attention promptly for diagnosis and treatment.

## Prevention of Malaria in Academic City

Preventing malaria in Academic City involves several proactive measures:

1. **Mosquito Nets**: Students residing in rooms equipped only with fans should acquire mosquito nets to protect themselves while sleeping. These nets act as a physical barrier, preventing mosquitoes from biting and transmitting the malaria parasite.
2. **Utilize Classrooms with Nets**: Whenever possible, students should opt to study in classrooms that are equipped with nets on the windows. These nets serve as an additional barrier against mosquito entry, reducing the risk of malaria transmission during study sessions.
3. **Mosquito Repellents**: Students should make use of mosquito repellents to further deter mosquito bites, especially when spending time outdoors or in areas prone to mosquito activity. Applying repellents containing DEET or picaridin like Medisoft Mosquito Repelent can effectively repel mosquitoes for several hours.
4. **Mosquito Sprays**: Mosquito sprays are made available in the hostels for on-campus students. These sprays can be used to eliminate mosquitoes within living spaces, reducing the risk of bites and malaria transmission. Students can request access to mosquito sprays from the Hostel Coordinators for use as needed.

By implementing these preventive measures, students can significantly reduce their risk of contracting malaria and contribute to maintaining a healthier living environment within Academic City.

## Treatment of Malaria

Absolutely, seeking prompt medical attention from the Acity clinic or another reputable health center is crucial upon noticing signs and symptoms of malaria. It's vital to avoid self-medication by

taking malaria drugs without a prescription, as improper use of medication can lead to drug resistance and other complications.

Visiting a health center that is aware of one's medical records is advantageous as it allows healthcare providers to make informed decisions regarding diagnosis and treatment. Having access to medical history can aid in identifying any underlying conditions, allergies, or previous episodes of malaria, enabling tailored and effective management of the illness.

Overall, timely and professional medical care is essential in managing malaria effectively and preventing the progression of the disease to severe complications.