

Yellow Fever is a viral infection that causes damage to the liver, kidney, heart and gastrointestinal tract. Major symptoms may include sudden onset of fever, yellowing of the skin (jaundice) and hemorrhage. It occurs predominately in South America, the Caribbean Islands and Africa. The disease is spread through bites of infected mosquitos. Incidence of the disease tends to increase in the summer as the mosquito population increases, and it occurs year round in tropical climates. Yellow Fever is caused by a virus spread by the bite by an infected mosquito. Initially, a mosquito acquires the disease by ingesting the blood of an infected host. The mosquito then transmits the infection to its next bite victim. Yellow Fever affects males and females equally. People living in semitropical or tropical climates are at risk unless they are vaccinated against this infection. People in southern areas of the United States, living near marshes and swamps may be at risk during the summer months. However, most cases of Yellow Fever occur in Africa and South America. The treatment of Yellow Fever is symptomatic and supportive. Preventative measures consist of mosquito control and a vaccine that prevents development of the infection. Immunity from a vaccination usually develops after 10 days and lasts for more than 10 years. In some cases, side effects associated with vaccination may occur five to 10 days later. These side effects affect approximately 5 percent of individuals receiving immunization and may include headache, fever, and/or aching muscles.