

Malaria is a communicable parasitic disorder spread through the bite of the Anopheles mosquito. Major symptoms may vary depending on which species of parasite causes the infection and the stage of development of the parasite. Chills and fever commonly occur, although not every case follows the same pattern. Although the disorder was once thought to be under control throughout the world, malaria is a widespread infection especially in the tropics where certain types of mosquitos are becoming resistant to pesticides. The annual number of cases reported in the United States has increased in recent years. Malaria is most commonly transmitted through the bite of the female Anopheles mosquito which is infected by a malaria parasite (Plasmodium). Plasmodium Falciparum, Plasmodium Ovale, Plasmodium Malariae and Plasmodium Vivax are the four species of the parasite which can affect humans. Additionally, transfusion of blood from an infected donor, or sharing contaminated needles may transmit the infection from one person to another. In very rare cases, the disorder has been transmitted from an infected mother to a fetus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, malaria is uncommon in the United States where approximately 1,200 cases are diagnosed each year, usually having been contracted abroad. In the United States, malaria results in two to five deaths, on the average, each year. Most cases in the U.S. occur among travelers, immigrants, and refugees.