

# Yellow fever

## Diagnosis

Diagnosing yellow fever based on signs and symptoms can be difficult because early in its course, the infection can be easily confused with malaria, typhoid, dengue fever and other viral hemorrhagic fevers.

To diagnose your condition, your doctor will likely:

- Ask questions about your medical and travel history
- Collect a blood sample for testing

If you have yellow fever, your blood may reveal the virus itself. If not, blood tests also can detect antibodies and other substances specific to the virus.

## Treatment

No antiviral medications have proved helpful in treating yellow fever. As a result, treatment consists primarily of supportive care in a hospital. This includes providing fluids and oxygen, maintaining adequate blood pressure, replacing blood loss, providing dialysis for kidney failure, and treating any other infections that develop. Some people receive transfusions of plasma to replace blood proteins that improve clotting.

If you have yellow fever, your doctor will likely recommend that you stay inside, away from mosquitoes, to avoid transmitting the disease to others. Once you've had yellow fever, you'll be immune to the disease for the rest of your life.

## Preparing for your appointment

Call your doctor if you've recently returned from travel abroad and develop mild symptoms similar to those that occur with yellow fever. If your symptoms are severe, go to an emergency room or call 911 or your local emergency number.

Here's some information to help you get ready, and know what to expect from your doctor.

### Information to gather in advance

- **Symptom history.** Write down any symptoms you've been experiencing and for how long.

- **Recent exposure to possible sources of infection.** Be sure to describe international trips in detail, including the countries you visited and the dates, as well as any contact you may have had with mosquitoes.
- **Medical history.** Make a list of your key medical information, including other conditions for which you're being treated and any medications, vitamins or supplements you're taking. Your doctor will also need to know your vaccination history.
- **Questions to ask your doctor.** Write down your questions in advance so that you can make the most of your time with your doctor.

The list below suggests questions to raise with your doctor about yellow fever. Don't hesitate to ask more questions during your appointment.

- What's the most likely cause of my symptoms?
- Are there any other possible causes for my symptoms?
- What kinds of tests do I need?
- Are treatments available to help me recover?
- How long do you expect a full recovery will take?
- When can I return to work or school?
- Am I at risk of any long-term complications from yellow fever?

## What to expect from your doctor

Your doctor is likely to ask you a number of questions. Being ready to answer them may reserve time to go over any points you want to talk about in-depth. Your doctor may ask:

- What are your symptoms?
- When did you first begin experiencing symptoms?
- Do your symptoms seem to be getting better or worse?
- Did your symptoms briefly get better and then come back?
- Have you recently traveled abroad? Where?
- Were you exposed to mosquitoes while traveling?
- Did you update your vaccinations before traveling?
- Are you being treated for any other medical conditions?
- Are you taking any medications?

By [Mayo Clinic Staff](#)

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