

## [Clinical Presentation >> Typical Presentation](#)

### How different patients of malaria look when they are first seen

Initially symptoms resemble those of a minor viral illness. These include:

- Lack of sense of well being
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Abdominal discomfort
- Muscle aches followed by fever
- Nausea/ vomiting

These may be followed by typical malaria picture:

- Fever spikes (sudden rise and fall in temperature)
- Chills
- Rigors

#### **Cold stage**

As the temperature begins to rise, there is intense headache and muscular discomfort. The patient feels cold, clutches blankets, and curls up shivering and uncommunicative. (The chill) . Within minutes the limbs begin to shake and teeth chatter, and the temperature climbs rapidly to a peak. The rigor usually lasts 10-30 minutes but can last upto 90 minutes.

#### **Hot stage**

By the end of rigor there is peripheral vasodilatation and the skin feels hot and dry. The temperature is high.

#### **Sweating**

Profuse sweat then breaks out. It lasts for 2-4 hours. The patient is soaked in sweat and the temp falls. The blood pressure is relatively low. The patient feels exhausted and may sleep. Defervescence usually takes 4-8 hours. Fever is irregular at first with temperature exceeding 39 degrees centigrade. It may rise upto 40oC.

#### **Incubation time**

The time interval between mosquito bite and development of malaria is 13-14 days except for P. malariae (35 days)

#### **If the infection is left untreated**

- Fever recurs every third day in P.vivax and ovale infection establishing a 2-day cycle (tertian)
- Spike occurs every three days (Quartan) in P.malariae infection i.e. fever recurs every fourth day
- The pattern of fever in P. falciparum infection is erratic
- Paroxysms with rigors are more common in P. vivax & P. ovale than in P. falciparum and P. malariae malaria. True rigors are unusual in naturally acquired falciparum malaria.
- As the infection continues the spleen and liver enlarge and anemia develops. The patient loses weight. If no treatment is given the natural infection stabilizes for several weeks or months and then gradually resolves.

#### **Associated Symptoms**

- Mild abdominal discomfort
- Constipation
- Diarrhoea

- Children are irritable, have less appetite

### **Malaria in Pregnancy**

There is increased risk of severe Falciparum malaria in the second and third trimester of pregnancy.

- In areas of less transmission, it is an important cause of fetal death and results in high maternal mortality.
- In areas of intense transmission, it may be associated with low birth weight. The infected mothers may be asymptomatic.

### **Malaria in children**

The majority of childhood malarial infections present with fever and malaise. In addition to the clinical features mentioned for adults malaria in children may lead to -

- Convulsions
- Coma
- Hypoglycaemia
- Metabolic acidosis
- Severe anaemia

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