

GENERAL HEALTH ADVICE ON HAZE, ZIKA, MALARIA AND DENGUE

The purpose of this article is to give delegates and conference organisers a general idea of the Key Facts, Symptoms, and Precautionary Measures for four health risks: haze, zika, malaria and dengue. Major cities in Sarawak enjoy a high level of hygiene and safety, and medical facilities are plentiful. Delegates and travellers in general are advised to ensure they have international health insurance coverage before travelling to any country. Sarawak will provide a physician situated at the venue of the 55th ICCA Congress 2016 (at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching). You may also refer to your hotel reception for advice on medical clinics located nearby, or refer to this list of major hospitals in Kuching that offer 24 hours emergency care in the Appendix - please scroll to the last page.

Haze Advisory Guidelines

(Source: Ministry of Health, Malaysia <http://www.moh.gov.my/index.php/pages/view/192>)

Key Facts:

1. A common indication of the haze is a visible “cloud of smoke” that floats in the air and is usually accompanied by a burnt smell.
2. Malaysia is affected annually by haze; the main contributor being forest-burning by neighbouring countries.

Symptoms:

1. Eye irritation, watering eyes, and/or conjunctivitis (a type of eye inflammation)
2. Running nose, stuffy nose, sneezing, and/or post-nasal drip
3. Throat irritation, dry throat, sore throat and/or coughing, phlegm
4. Headache, dizziness, fatigue and/or stress
5. Decreased lung function, depressed respiratory immune defences, chest tightness, chest pain, shortness of breath, bronchitis (lung inflammation)

Precautionary Measures:

1. Each individual’s reactions to pollutants may vary; delegates who are have chronic lung or heart conditions are advised to seek medical care
2. Should haze conditions become worse, the Secretariat will be alerted and may notify delegates during the housekeeping announcement. Real-time air pollutant index (API) in Malaysia is available online at <http://aqicn.org/map/malaysia/#@g/3.8258/108.9748/>

Zika Virus Disease Advisory Guidelines

(Source: Disease Control Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia)

Key Facts:

1. Zika virus disease is caused by a virus transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes.
2. Delegates travelling to (or returning from) Zika virus affected countries, who also exhibit the abovementioned symptoms within 7 days of travel, should seek medical advice immediately and inform the attending doctor of their travel history.

Symptoms:

1. Low grade fever (less than 38.5 degree Celsius) and rash.
2. Other symptoms may include prolonged muscle pain, joint pain, headache, pain behind the eyes and conjunctivitis, of up to several days in duration.

Precautionary Measures:

1. If you experience the abovementioned symptoms, seek immediate medical assistance. The disease bears similar clinical signs to dengue and there is no specific treatment or vaccine currently available. Note - treatment is focused on relieving the symptoms.
2. Bite prevention - avoid mosquito bites by using insect repellent and clothing that covers your arms and legs when outdoors, and using a mosquito net when sleeping in non-airconditioned rooms.

Malaria Advisory Guidelines

(Source: Management Guidelines of Malaria in Malaysia, Ministry of Health Malaysia, World Health Organization and NHS UK)

Key Facts:

1. Malaria is caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected mosquitoes.
2. Young children, pregnant women and non-immune travellers from malaria-free areas are particularly vulnerable to the disease when they become infected.
3. In any case of suspected Malaria, see a doctor within 24 hours. Early detection is key. Without prompt treatment, Malaria (*P. falciparum*) can progress to severe illness and death.

Symptoms:

1. The first symptoms of malaria - fever, headache, chills and vomiting - usually appear between 10 and 15 days after the infected mosquito bite.
2. Early symptoms of Malaria are non-specific; meaning fever and flu-like symptoms, such as chills, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

Precautionary Measures:

1. Awareness of risk - find out whether you're at risk of getting malaria - residents of non-tropical countries which do not have mosquitoes may be at higher risk.
2. Bite prevention - avoid mosquito bites by using insect repellent, using clothing that covers your arms and legs when outdoors, and using a mosquito net when sleeping in non-airconditioned rooms.
3. Check whether you need to take malaria prevention tablets - if you do, make sure you take the right antimalarial tablets at the right dose, and finish the course
4. Diagnosis - seek immediate medical advice if you have malaria symptoms, including up to a year after you return from travelling.

Dengue Fever Advisory Guidelines

(Source: Ministry of Health Malaysia)

Key Facts:

1. Dengue fever is a viral infection transmitted by two specific types of mosquitoes, the *Aedes aegypti* and the *Aedes albopictus* species. Once you are bitten, expect an incubation period of 4-7 days.
2. Dengue is triggered by mainly the ineffectiveness of vector control and poor environmental sanitation. Climate change has also been named as a contributing factor.

Symptoms:

1. Sudden, high fever accompanied by painful body (muscle and/or joints) ache
2. Other symptoms may include flu-like symptoms, red spots/ flushing, appearance of swollen lymph nodes
3. Pain behind or in back of the eyes
4. Some individuals may develop a sore throat, nausea, vomiting, abdominal and/or back pain or experience a loss of appetite.

Precautionary Measures:

Please see the “Precautionary Measures” for Zika Virus Advisory Guidelines, above.

HOSPITALS IN KUCHING, SARAWAK

Sarawak General Hospital

Jalan Hospital, 93586 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia
Tel: +6082-276 666

Normah Medical Specialist Centre

937 Jalan Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Yaakub,
Petra Jaya, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia
Toll free line: 1-300-88-4677 Tel : +6082-440055
Emergency Call (Ambulance service): +6082-311999

Timberland Medical Centre

Lot 5164-5165, Block 16 KCLD, 2 1/2 Mile, Rock Road,
Taman Timberland, 93250 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia
Tel: +6082-234466

Kuching Specialist Hospital (KPJ Group)

Lot 10420, Block 11, Tabuan Stutong Commercial Centre
Jalan Setia Raja, 93350 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia
Tel: +6082-365777 Emergency Call (Ambulance service) : +6082-365030

Borneo Medical Centre

Lot 10992, 801-2B Jalan Tun Jugah, 93350 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia
Tel: +6082-507 333