

What is Japanese encephalitis?

Japanese encephalitis (JE) is an infectious mosquito-borne illness. The mosquitoes that transmit the disease usually bite from sunset to sunrise, so the risk of infection is higher when spending time outdoors during these hours.

Most people infected with JE do not develop symptoms; however, when symptoms do occur—typically 5 to 15 days after infection—JE can cause brain swelling, long-term neurological damage, and, in severe cases, death. Infants and older adults are at the highest risk.

What is the risk of infection?

JE is most commonly found throughout much of Asia and in parts of Oceania. The risk of infection is higher in rural and agricultural areas where the disease is prevalent, particularly for travellers who stay for longer periods and participate in outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, camping, or fieldwork.

Travellers who remain mainly in urban areas of affected countries and who spend limited time outdoors generally have a low risk of infection.

What prevention methods are available?

Taking steps to prevent mosquito bites when travelling to affected areas is strongly recommended.

In Canada, a JE vaccine is approved for use in travellers aged 2 months and older, depending on individual risk factors.



Talk to your healthcare provider or visit a travel health clinic to discuss how to protect yourself against Japanese encephalitis.