

# Traveller Information Sheets



## Leishmaniasis

Leishmaniasis is spread by the bite of a sandflies to humans and animals.

There are 3 main types of leishmaniasis;

- Cutaneous leishmaniasis
- Mucocutaneous leishmaniasis
- Visceral leishmaniasis

### *Cutaneous leishmaniasis*

This is the most common form of the disease. It is found most commonly in;

- The Mediterranean Basin.
- South East Asia in rural areas below 600m above sea level, with a heavy annual rainfall, with a mean humidity above 70%, a temperature range of 15–38 °C.
- The Middle East
- Central Asia.
- Over two-third of new cases occur in six countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Brazil, Colombia, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and the Syrian Arab Republic.

It is characterised ulcers on exposed parts of the body which leave life-long scars and serious disability.

### *Mucocutaneous leishmaniasis*

Is found;

- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Peru

It is characterised by partial or total destruction of mucous membranes of the nose, mouth and throat.

### *Visceral leishmaniasis*

Is found;

- The Mediterranean Basin
- Highly endemic in the Indian subcontinent
- Highly endemic in East Africa.
- Bangladesh
- Brazil
- Ethiopia
- South Sudan
- Sudan.

It is also called kala-azar and is characterised by irregular bouts of fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and anaemia. It is fatal if left untreated.

*Is there a vaccine for leishmaniasis?*

There is no vaccine available.

*How can it be prevented?*

1. The use of an insect repellent containing DEET or PICARIDIN
2. Avoiding the outdoors between dawn and dusk
3. Wearing long, light coloured, loose clothing.
4. Avoid wearing any strong perfume
5. If accommodation consists of backpacker or hostel or tent, the use of a net impregnated with permethrin.
6. Washing clothes in permethrin solution prior to travel.

*Reference*

Pan American Health Organisation, 2014, Washington DC, viewed 27<sup>th</sup> April 2014, <[http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=6417&Itemid=39345&lang=en](http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6417&Itemid=39345&lang=en)>

World Health Organisation, 2014, Geneva Switzerland, viewed 27<sup>th</sup> April 2014, <<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs375/en/>>

World Health Organisation, 2014, Geneva Switzerland, viewed 27<sup>th</sup> April 2014, <<http://www.who.int/topics/leishmaniasis/en/>>