

# Yellow Fever Vaccine

Travel vaccines may be recommended or required for your trip. Vaccines help to prevent illnesses from bacteria and viruses. They reduce disease spread and can prevent complications and deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases.

## What is yellow fever (YF)?

YF is a serious and sometimes fatal viral infection caused by the YF virus. YF can be mild or life-threatening.

## How is YF spread? Am I at risk?

YF is spread to humans by the bite of infected mosquitoes. Mosquitoes that spread yellow fever typically bite during the daytime, particularly around sunrise and sunset. The virus is not spread directly from person-to-person or by mosquitoes in Canada.

Travellers are at risk when going to areas of Africa and South America where YF virus is present.

## What are the symptoms of YF infection?

Most infected individuals do not have symptoms or only have mild symptoms.

The time from infection to illness is usually 3 to 6 days.

Some individuals develop fever, muscle pain with prominent backache, headache, shivers, loss of appetite, and nausea/vomiting.

Most people will recover, but small number of people will get better for a short time and then symptoms worsen. Jaundice, bleeding, shock, organ failure, and death can occur (YF will be fatal for 30 to 60 out of 100 people that develop these more serious symptoms).

## How can YF infections be prevented?

### Avoid mosquito bites.

- use effective insect repellent
- wear light-coloured long-sleeved pants and shirts, treat clothing and gear with 0.5% permethrin
- sleep under a treated mosquito net
- reduce exposure to mosquitoes (mosquitoes bite during the day and night)

**Get vaccinated.** YF vaccine is very effective and long-lasting for most individuals. The YF vaccine provides protection within 10 days for >80% of people vaccinated and provides protection for >99% of people vaccinated after 30 days. YF vaccine is only available at designated yellow fever vaccination centres. The Public Health Agency of Canada has a [list of YF vaccination centres in Saskatchewan](#).

- **The vaccine does not replace insect bite precautions.** Vaccinated travellers should still follow measures to avoid insect bites.

## Can I get this vaccine for free?

The YF vaccine is sometimes recommended for travellers, but it is not available for free in Saskatchewan.

Travellers to YF virus-affected areas should talk to a health care provider at a YF vaccination centre about purchasing YF vaccine. Some private insurance may cover some to all of the cost of the vaccine. **The Saskatchewan Ministry of Health does not reimburse any costs associated with privately purchased vaccines.**

## Who should *not* get the YF vaccine?

- People who have had a serious or life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of YF vaccine, or any ingredient in the vaccine (including egg or chicken proteins).
- People with a history of thymus disease (e.g., thymoma, thymectomy, myasthenia gravis).
- Infants less than 6 months old should not receive YF vaccine due to the risk of serious adverse events.
- People who are seriously ill, with or without a fever, should postpone immunization.

People who should generally not receive YF vaccine:

- People who are immunocompromised
- People who are pregnant and/or breast/chestfeeding

The YF vaccine is also generally not recommended for:

- Infants between 6 and 8 months old
- Adults  $\geq 60$  years old

**Talk to your health care provider to discuss the risks and benefits of the YF vaccine if travel cannot be avoided.**

## What are common reactions to the YF vaccine?

The most common side effects following YF vaccination are pain, inflammation, swelling at the injection site, weakness, headache, muscle pain, and mild fever.

Side effects are usually mild and last only a few days.

You can treat a fever (at least 6 to 8 hours after immunization) if you are uncomfortable and not sleeping.



#### TREATING FEVERS AND PAIN:

**All ages:** acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol®, Tempra®)

**6 months & older:** ibuprofen (e.g., Advil®, Motrin®)

**DO NOT give acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) to anyone younger than 18 years due to the risk of Reye's syndrome.**

It is recommended to stay on-site for at least 15 minutes after vaccination in case you develop anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a rare, life-threatening allergic reaction that can be treated. Symptoms may include hives, swelling of the tongue, lips, or throat, and difficulty breathing. Call 911 immediately if you develop anaphylaxis after you have left the vaccination appointment.

### Who should I report reactions to?

Report any unexpected or adverse reactions to your doctor, nurse practitioner, pharmacist, or call 811 or 911 as soon as possible.

### What does the YF vaccine contain?

YF-VAX® contains yellow fever virus strain 17D-204 in living avian leukosis virus-free (ALV) chicken embryos, sorbitol, gelatin, sodium chloride.

### Important to Know:

#### How to take:

YF-VAX® is given as a single dose just under the skin (subcutaneously).

#### When to take:

Travellers should receive YF-VAX® at least ten days before departure. It takes ten days for the YF vaccine to become effective.

#### Official record of immunization:

Some countries legally require the International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) for entry. The certificate becomes valid 10 days after receiving the YF vaccine and is valid for the life of the person vaccinated. YF vaccine recipients will receive this certificate to bring with them on their trip. If you cannot receive the YF vaccine due to a medical reason, you can be provided with a medical waiver by the YF vaccination centre.

#### Booster doses:

Booster doses of YF vaccine are usually not needed. A one-time booster may be recommended for some travellers. Talk to your health care provider for details.

### Immunization Records

Immunization records are stored in many different places in Saskatchewan. Your pharmacy vaccination may not appear on [MySaskHealthRecord](#) or other registries. Visit [medSask.usask.ca](http://medSask.usask.ca) for tips for locating your immunization records.

**Keep printed immunization records** provided by the pharmacy in a safe place for future reference and bring them to each vaccination visit.

### Mature Minor Consent

Minors that are mature and capable of understanding the benefits and risks of vaccination can provide their own consent to receiving a vaccine. Vaccine providers must ensure that vaccine recipients understand the benefits and risks for each vaccine and the risks of not getting vaccinated.

#### REFERENCES:

Product monograph for [YF-VAX®](#)

Canadian Immunization Guide (CIG): [Yellow fever vaccine](#)

CDC Yellow Book [Yellow Fever](#)

CDC Travelers' Health [Yellow Fever](#)

IAMAT [Insect Bite Prevention](#)

HealthLinkBC [Yellow fever vaccine](#)

TDN [Yellow Fever](#)

WHO [Yellow fever fact sheet](#)

CIG: [Anaphylaxis and other acute reactions following vaccination](#)

CIG: [Immunization in pregnancy and breastfeeding](#)

SCPP Disclosure of the [Personal Health Information of Minors to Parents/Legal Custodians](#)