

Doxycycline (For Travelers)

What is Doxycycline?

Doxycycline is a medication used to prevent malaria. A common name for this drug is Vibramycin.

Who should take Doxycycline?

Doxycycline is recommended for travelers to malaria-endemic areas of Thailand, bordering Myanmar, and Cambodia, or as an alternative to Mefloquine in Chloroquine-resistant malaria risk areas. It is the second drug of choice in Africa if Mefloquine cannot be taken.

How is Doxycycline taken?

One capsule of Doxycycline 100 mg is taken daily, beginning 1 to 2 days before arriving at the malaria-risk area, every day while in the area, and for 4 weeks after leaving the area. It is very important to take this medication regularly for proper protection.

If you do not tolerate this medication, try an alternative medication. There are several options available. Travelling in a malaria risk area without such prevention should be your last choice.

Doxycycline may cause:

- An increased risk of sunburn. Avoid the midday sun, use a high SPF sunblock, and wear clothing which covers the body well, including a hat.
- Nausea. Take this drug on a full stomach.
- An increased risk of vaginal yeast infections. If you are familiar with the symptoms, use an over-the-counter treatment. If you have not been diagnosed with a yeast infection in the past, it is best to see a doctor.
- Heartburn or irritation of the esophagus. To prevent this, take it in the daytime and do not lie down for an hour after taking it.

What are the side effects?

Do not take this drug if you:

- are pregnant or breastfeeding,
- are under 8 years old, as it may cause staining of the teeth,
- have a known sensitivity to tetracyclines, or
- have a condition called myasthenia gravis.

This drug must not be taken if it is past the expiry date.

Advise your doctor or nurse if you take anticoagulants, antacids, anticonvulsants, iron, penicillin, 'pepto-bismal', or birth control pills.

This drug does not guarantee that you will not get malaria. If you get a fever or flu-like illness anytime in the next year, tell your doctor that you have recently been in an area with malaria.