

Travel websites should inform people about malaria, say doctors

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Travel websites, especially those that offer 'last minute' deals, should inform people about the risks of malaria and the need to take preventative medication before travelling, say experts in infectious diseases today.

Their warning, in a letter to this week's *BMJ*, follows three recent cases of malaria in UK citizens returning from 'winter sun' holidays to the Gambia, where malaria is highly endemic.

They all used the same travel website. Two had made a late booking and all failed to take preventative drugs (chemoprophylaxis). Within two weeks of returning to the UK, they all presented to hospital with severe malaria.

Imported cases of malaria remain relatively common in the UK, say the doctors. The majority of malaria in the UK is contracted in West Africa (813 of 1,495 cases in 2009) and a significant proportion occurs in holidaymakers (57 in 2009).

They say that this risk could potentially be reduced if travel websites include explicit messages regarding the need for [medical advice](#) and effective chemoprophylaxis prior to travelling to [malaria](#) endemic areas.

"A warning about the need to allow sufficient time to organise these interventions may reduce the particular risk to individuals making late bookings," they conclude.

Provided by British Medical Journal

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