

# What Does it Feel Like to Get Malaria?

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**Read the story below for a firsthand account.**

**We finally landed.** I was so delirious and dehydrated that I'd been taken from the plane in a wheelchair. When my mother saw me, she couldn't say anything! She looked so upset. I was in the isolation unit and barely weighed 90 pounds, my bones were protruding.

**I was just back from a dream vacation** in Ghana that had turned into a nightmare and it was my own fault.

**All year I had saved money for the trip** to Ghana and was so excited—until the third day. The anti-malarial pills I was taking were making me feel nauseous and taking the fun out of my trip to Ghana.

**I didn't want to get malaria,** but I met other travelers who weren't taking their pills. Everyone kept telling me that I would be fine. I didn't want to ruin my vacation by feeling sick all the time so, I stopped taking my pills. The sick feeling went away, but I was becoming very weak; it had happened so gradually, I hardly noticed.

**I started to feel exhausted,** freezing and began vomiting a lot. As time went on I got sicker. I was so thirsty, but I couldn't even sip a glass of water. I didn't want to sightsee or go anywhere- all I could do was drag myself a few yards down the sand and lie there shivering. After two weeks I had lost 18 pounds, I had no energy, and felt sick all the time.

**On the flight home, I was so sick** the woman sitting next to me put my head on her lap and stroked my hair.

**At the hospital** my red blood cells were so low that it was almost impossible for the nurses to take enough blood for tests. Finally, it was confirmed that I had malaria.

**Over the next week, I started to feel better;** it took me three months to recover fully. I was very, very lucky as I had no kidney or liver damage.



