

Amano Christian School **Malaria Prevention Programme**

This is a malarial area, as are many other parts of the country. Malaria is by far the most common life-threatening illness in sub-Saharan Africa. Amano Christian School follows the recommended guidelines for malaria prevention, including medication.

Some anti-malarials have adverse side effects; others are not suitable for children or pregnant women. Adults have a choice of prophylaxis against malaria.

Proguanil (paludrine) is not recommended by the World Health Organisation as it has lost its effectiveness in many parts of the world. However, it is commonly used here, where its effectiveness has been proven. It is taken on a daily basis, is suitable for all ages and has minimal long-term side effects, the chief of these being mouth ulcers. We have not yet had a case of malaria amongst staff or pupils taking this medicine.

Mefloquine (larium) taken weekly is very effective but can have unpleasant and serious side-effects, especially for those with a family or personal history of mental or nervous disorders. Those who have had experience of this drug in the past will know if it suits them. Some people have no trouble with it at all.

Doxycycline is also very effective and is taken on a daily basis.

Malarone is a popular, if expensive, alternative, and is also a very pleasant treatment with few side effects. Use of this drug as a prophylactic will speed up resistance to it as the mosquito becomes "used" to the low doses. Once resistance emerges, drugs can no longer be used as a treatment. We therefore request staff members (and visitors) not to use this as a prophylaxis.

The chosen medication should be taken regularly to be effective and continued for six weeks after leaving a malarial area to ensure ongoing protection. The incubation period of the different types of malaria varies.

Other Malaria Prevention Measures

Taking medication is no substitute for avoiding mosquito bites as much as possible. Exposure cannot be avoided completely, but the following measures help reduce mosquito bites and therefore the risk and severity of malaria:

- Sleeping under mosquito nets impregnated with insecticide like Permethrin. These can be bought from the school.
- Keeping doors and windows closed and/or screened at night.
- Using insect repellent evenings and nights.
- Insecticide sprays in rooms and external spraying of houses.
- Wearing long clothing covering arms and legs in the evenings and at night.
- Mosquito coils.

At the onset of a fever, the staff member will be tested for malaria, regardless of any concomitant infection or other fever-producing ailment prevalent at the time. If malaria parasites are found, the appropriate treatment will be given depending on the laboratory results.