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Benin: Malaria

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Name: Benin



(http://christiandickey.weebly.com/uploads/2/6/1/0/26107663/2815002_orig.jpg.)

Location: Benin is a country in Western Africa, bordering the Bight of Benin, between Nigeria and Togo. Benin can be compared in size to the state of Pennsylvania. In Benin, sandbanks create difficult access to the coast with no natural harbors, river mouths, or islands.

Population: The population of Benin is roughly eleven million people, made up of four major ethnic groups. The four major groups, from largest to smallest, in Benin are Fon (and related) Adja (and related), Yoruba (and related), and Bariba (and related).

Religion: Benin has three major religions that are practiced. From most popular to least, the religions practiced are Muslim, Roman Catholic, and Protestant. Overall, Benin is a youthful nation, with almost sixty-five percent of its population under the age of twenty-five.

Political Structure: Politically, Benin is characterized as a presidential republic. This means that the president is both chief of state, and head of the government. The president is elected by absolute majority popular vote, in two rounds, if needed. He/she will serve a five-year term with eligibility for a second term. There are more

than thirty political parties in Benin, which represent a wide range of the population. **Infrastructure:** Benin's infrastructure is extremely weak, and is ranked as one of the worst in the world, in terms of airports, railways, roadways, and waterways. With this major issue, you can understand why transportation is a major issue facing the small country.

Public Health Issue: In Benin, there are many diseases that put the health of its population at serious risk, including bacteria and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, and Malaria. Malaria is one of the top diseases in Benin, with an estimated five to ten thousand confirmed cases, but the number of actual cases is expected to be much higher. The disease can be potentially life-threatening for individuals who become infected. Malaria is an extremely severe blood disease, that if gone untreated can become life threatening. Malaria is transmitted through the bite of the mosquito.



(https://www.intrepidtravel.com/sites/intrepid/files/styles/low-quality/public/pd/highlight/image/benin_ganvie.jpg)

Risk Factor: The problem has become so severe in Benin that malaria is considered to be one of the high-risk diseases in the country, affecting the entire nation, and putting the entire population at risk. As a result, all potential travelers planning to come to the country are advised to get vaccinated prior to entering. While malaria

is a threat to the entire population in Benin the group that can be considered a high-priority risk are children five and under. The disease can attack a child's body much quicker than an adult, which is why it doesn't go as much of a surprise that it is the top causes of death for children under the age of five. In 2013 the World Health Organization estimated that twenty-one percent of deaths in children under the age of five was caused from malaria. It is estimated that one in every ten kids will contract malaria before the age of five. Once an infected mosquito bites a human, the parasites multiply in the hosts liver before infecting and destroying red blood cells. In some places, malaria can be treated and controlled with early diagnosis. However, countries such as Benin lack the resources to do this effectively. Currently, no vaccine is licensed for use in the U.S. or

globally. Preventing malaria in Benin may not be as easy as one may think. Because the country is very poor, most of the population cannot afford any type of preventive medicine.

Possible solution: My suggestion would be to first, continue to educate the population living within the country on the ways in which they can avoid being bitten by mosquitos. Also inform them more on malaria itself and the warning signs that they can look for, in the hopes that they can seek treatment before their condition worsens. My final suggestion would involve help from the outside world, in the form of money to set up medical facilities around the country where patients can be treated for malaria and any other illnesses. While this may be a big task going forward, it may be Benin's best bet in fighting malaria.

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