

Medical Access to Quinine for Malaria Treatment Streamlined in Canada through the Canadian Malaria Network



Malaria continues to be a major cause of death worldwide and is the principal life-threatening infection facing Canadian travellers in malaria-endemic areas. Severe *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria infections may have a mortality rate of 20% or higher. Patients require immediate hospitalization and urgent, intensive medical management, including parenteral malaria therapy.

Parenteral quinine, the preferred medication for the treatment of severe and cerebral malaria due to *P. falciparum*, has not been readily available in this country, except through Health Canada's Special Access Program. Although quinidine is equally efficacious in treating malaria, it has a risk of life-threatening cardiotoxicity and an associated requirement for cardiac monitoring.

Because of the potential for adverse outcomes due to delays in acquiring parenteral malaria therapy, the **Canadian Malaria Network (CMN)** has been established in 12 medical centres across Canada to facilitate the storage and rapid distribution of parenteral

quinine for the treatment of severe *P. falciparum* infections. CMN Centres can provide, on request, guidance in the management of malaria infections. In addition, each Centre provides surveillance data to Health Canada on all malaria cases treated with parenteral quinine.

Upon request for parenteral quinine from any of the designated CMN Centres [see below for list], the attending physician will receive via courier delivery within 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week:

- parenteral quinine supply, and
- relevant paperwork: information on treatment and chemotherapy for severe *falciparum* malaria, and surveillance data collection forms (Forms A & B).

The attending physician will be asked to provide surveillance information at time of diagnosis (Form A) and at day 28 (Form B) to the CMN National Coordinators.

Note: Fever occurring in a traveller within three months of returning from a malaria-endemic area is a medical emergency and should be investigated urgently with thick and thin blood films for malaria.

Contact Information

The following hospital Centers across Canada have been identified as participants in the Canadian Malaria Network. Each Center will have depositories of parenteral quinine for the treatment of severe malaria and can provide guidance in the management of malaria infections.

To obtain parenteral quinine, please contact the listed pharmacy in your area. The designated physician for each Center can be used as a resource for any questions you may have with regard to the treatment of malaria.

For after-hours assistance please contact the infectious disease consultant on call at the respective center.

CMN National Coordinators

Name:	Dr. Anne E. McCarthy	Dawna Garber, RN
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CMN Centres, by province

British Columbia

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Alberta

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Name:	Dr. Susan M. Kuhn	Dr. Dominique Van Schijndel, Pharm.
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Manitoba

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Ontario

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Quebec

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Nova Scotia

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