



## Title:

### **Credit crunch prompts malaria warning. Visits to malaria hotspots set to soar as Brits seek out best holiday deal**

#### Summary:

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#### Main Body

With Brits expected to trade in this year's European package holiday in favour of destinations offering better value for money, bargain-hunting travellers are being warned about the risk of the most life-threatening strain of malaria.

ABTA – The Travel Association expects that as the Euro continues to gain strength, holidays to Spain and France could be replaced by trips to popular, long-haul destinations such as Goa, Southeast Asia and Africa - where the pound will stretch further but there is a real risk of contracting malaria.

New figures from the Health Protection Agency (HPA) reveal that last year, over 1,500 UK travellers returned with malaria and nearly 75% of these cases were due to the most dangerous strain, *Plasmodium falciparum*<sup>1</sup>. With a nearly 200% increase in visits to [malaria risk destinations](#) over the past 10 years, malaria continues to be a major health concern for British travellers<sup>2</sup>.

'As money monitoring remains a top priority, we expect travellers to take advantage of last-minute deals to destinations where they'll get the best value for money, rather than skipping this year's summer holiday altogether,' says ABTA representative, Frances Tuke.

While this projection is good news for the tourism industry, it could be bad news for travellers' health: 'We know from studies that people who book their trips at the last minute are much less likely to seek travel health advice before they go,' says Dr George Kassianos, GP and member of the UK Malaria Guidelines Committee.

'Deaths can occur within 24 hours of the first symptoms of the most dangerous strain of malaria, so all travellers need to recognise the importance of speaking to their GP, practice nurse or travel clinic about [malaria prevention](#) before going abroad. Ideally, appointments should be made six to eight weeks before travel, but even later than this, your healthcare professional can still recommend a number of options.'

Malaria is one of the world's biggest killers – but it is preventable if the right steps are taken, such as avoiding being bitten and taking antimalarial medication as instructed: 'With people visiting more exotic destinations and [malaria hotspots](#) changing over time, up-to-date [travel health](#) advice should be considered just as essential as renewing your passport,' adds Dr Kassianos.

For more information malaria, please visit: [www.malariahotspots.co.uk](http://www.malariahotspots.co.uk). To find out if your next holiday destination is a malaria hotspot, text the destination to 07800 000 571.

Malaria Awareness Week 2008 runs from 12 – 18 May and aims to educate UK travellers about the risk of malaria and encourage them to seek expert medical advice ahead of every journey.

Ben Fogle, television presenter and adventurer, is this year's official campaign ambassador. Having travelled extensively through a number of malaria hotspots, Ben has seen first hand the effects of malaria on his fellow travellers and colleagues. [Click here to see Ben Fogle's experience of Malaria.](#)

Interviews with Dr Kassianos, Frances Tuke and Ben Fogle can be arranged. Case studies are also available.

**-Ends-**

**Issued by Beattie Communications on behalf of GlaxoSmithKline Travel Health.  
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**Notes to editors:**

The Malaria Awareness Campaign is sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline Travel Health in association with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 'Know Before You Go' campaign. It aims to encourage safe and healthy travel.

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<sup>1</sup> Health Protection Agency, 25 April 2008

[http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb\\_C/1209023438640?p=1204186170287](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1209023438640?p=1204186170287)

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics, International Passenger Survey, 1996, 2006 (The most recent date for which there are figures. Analysed by the Malaria Awareness Campaign, May 2008)