

Diseases

JAMILA Ooooh nice!

Why would I need a net?

ALFRED For protection. The tropical disease malaria is spread via mosquitoes carrying a parasite called *Plasmodium*. The parasite lives in red blood cells, which the mosquito picks up when it bites an infected organism. When the mosquito moves onto the next organism to feed, the parasite is passed on. Symptoms include fever, sickness and diarrhoea. Malaria can be fatal. To protect yourself from mosquito bites - cover up, use mosquito nets, and insect repellent. You can also take anti-malarial tablets, although these alone shouldn't be relied on.

JAMILA Okay... maybe I won't go there then.

ALFRED Diseases are found all over the world Jamila and there are many ways you can catch them. For example HIV, short for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It's spread from person to person via bodily fluids, such as blood, semen, vaginal fluid, and breast milk. It causes flu-like symptoms, such as a fever, rashes, and an inflamed throat.

HIV attacks the white blood cells which are your body's defence against disease. This lowers your immune system making you more susceptible to illnesses. If HIV isn't treated, it will progress to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome otherwise known as AIDS. Although there is no cure or vaccine, antiretroviral treatment can slow the disease and may lead to a near-normal life expectancy.

Another sexually transmitted disease is chlamydia. Symptoms include genital discharge, burning during urination, fever, and pain. Chlamydia can easily be

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treated with anti-biotics. However, if left untreated, it can lead to long term health problems and infertility. Primarily chlamydia and HIV are spread through unprotected sex. HIV can also be spread by sharing a hypodermic needle with someone who already has the disease. The best way to prevent either disease is by using condoms, avoiding the re-use of needles, and wearing gloves when treating bleeding wounds.

JAMILA Umm...

ALFRED So now you know more about diseases and how to protect yourself, you can go ahead and book your next adventure.

JAMILA You know what, you're right Alfred. I'll book my trip to the Amazon now!

Now, where can I buy a mosquito net?