

# Test before you treat: malaria rapid test

A step-by-step guide to doing a malaria rapid diagnostic test (RDT) and reading the result correctly.

**Test** **Not every fever is malaria.**  
Test every person with fever before giving malaria medicine. Treat only a positive result.

## Before you start

- RDT kit: test cassette, buffer and blood collector
- New sterile lancet and alcohol swab
- New pair of gloves
- Sharps box and waste bin
- Pen and a watch or timer
- Your register to record the result

## Who to test

- Anyone with fever now, or fever in the last 2 days
- Children with fever, chills or hot body
- Pregnant women with fever

**Danger signs?** Do not wait to test. Refer urgently. See page 2.

**Every brand is different.** Check your kit instructions for the number of buffer drops and the waiting time.

## DOING THE TEST

### Eight steps

#### 1 Check the kit

Check the expiry date and that the packet is not damaged. Open it only when you are ready.

#### 2 Prepare

Put on new gloves. Write the person's name or number and the date on the cassette.

#### 3 Clean the finger

Use the 4th finger. Wipe with the alcohol swab and let it dry fully.

#### 4 Prick the finger

Prick the side of the fingertip with a new lancet. Put the lancet straight into the sharps box.

#### 5 Collect the blood

Use the blood collector in the kit and place the blood in the small (blood) well.

#### 6 Add the buffer

Add the number of buffer drops shown in the kit instructions into the larger (buffer) well.

#### 7 Wait

Note the time. Wait the time stated on the kit, usually 15 to 20 minutes. Do not read early.

#### 8 Read and record

Read the result in good light, within the time the kit allows. Write it in your register.

# Reading the result and what to do



C T

## Positive

Two lines: one at **C** and one at **T**.  
A faint T line still counts as positive.



C T

## Negative

One line at **C** only. No malaria was found by the test.



C T

## Invalid

No line at **C**, even if there is a T line. Repeat with a new test.

### IF THE RESULT IS

#### Positive: treat

- Give the malaria medicine (ACT) recommended by national guidelines, with the right dose for age or weight.
- Give the first dose while you watch, with food or drink.
- Explain that the full course must be finished, even if the person feels better.
- Refer pregnant women and young babies as your guidelines say.

### IF THE RESULT IS

#### Negative: do not give malaria medicine

- Look for other causes of fever, such as cough, diarrhoea or infection.
- If the person has a cough for 2 weeks or more, refer for a TB test.
- Ask them to come back if the fever lasts more than 2 days.
- Refer to a facility if you are unsure.

### Danger signs: refer to a health facility immediately

- Not able to drink or breastfeed
- Vomiting everything
- Fits or convulsions
- Very sleepy or hard to wake
- Not able to sit or stand
- Fast or difficult breathing
- Very dark urine or yellow eyes
- Very pale palms or bleeding

### Stay safe

- Use a new lancet and new gloves for every person.
- Put used lancets in the sharps box straight away.
- Never reuse a test cassette.
- Store kits in a cool, dry place out of the sun.

### Prevent malaria

- Sleep under a treated net every night, all year.
- Clear standing water around the home.
- Pregnant women: attend antenatal care for preventive medicine.

## Net Test. Treat. Track. Prevent.

Record every test in your register, and remind every household to sleep under a net.