

# MN Malaria Stories: Anyone can get malaria

## REBECCA JOHNSON'S TRANSCRIPT: SHORT VERSION

[On-screen text - Rebecca's Story: Anyone can get malaria]

Several years ago, before traveling to Sierra Leone and Gambia for a month to visit family, I went to a travel clinic and they gave me medication to prevent malaria. I had malaria when I was a child and I knew I needed to protect myself so I wouldn't get it again.

I visited my brother in Freetown, my sister and her family in Bo, and my dad and other siblings in a village to the east. Most nights we would stay outside until eleven, sitting around the fire together and listening to elders tell family stories. It's one of my favorite parts of my visits home.

One thing led to another, and I ran out of meds before the end of my trip. I did use a bed net most nights, but there wasn't an extra one for me at my sister's house.

I was sitting and talking with my sister, and suddenly, I started getting chills. Then came the fever, headaches, stomach pain, and vomiting, the symptoms I remember from having malaria as a child. Eventually I felt well enough to fly back to Minnesota.

I know from personal experience that anyone can get malaria, even if you've had it before. Any time I travel back home, I will always take the medication as prescribed and make sure to have enough for my entire trip and the period after. I will still sit outside and share stories with my family, but now I will use bug spray and travel with my own bed net since they are affordable.

I'm sharing my story so that other people visiting family and friends back home don't have the same experience I had. Please protect yourself from malaria.

[On-screen text - Minnesota Department of Health [www.health.mn.gov/travel](http://www.health.mn.gov/travel)]

Minnesota Department of Health  
PO Box 64975  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975  
651-201-5414  
[www.health.mn.gov/travel](http://www.health.mn.gov/travel)

7/7/23

*To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5414.*