Guide to African Sleeping Sickness and Foreign Travel

What is African Sleeping Sickness?
African trypanosomiasis, more commonly referred to as “African Sleeping Sickness” is a parasitic disease which develops slowly and if treatment is delayed, usually proves fatal.

Where could I catch it?
Sleeping Sickness occurs only in African countries where there are Tsetse Flies that carry and relay the disease.

Symptoms:
The first stage of the disease will be fevers, headaches, itchiness, lethargy and painful aching joints. Following this includes confusion, numbness and trouble sleeping. Early detection makes treatment easier, especially before neurological problems arise.

Why do people get African Sleeping Sickness on holiday?
Transmission is via the Tsetse Fly, which resembles a large house fly. Common to many African countries there are two distinct forms to this disease:

- The acute form, known as ‘Rhodesian’ is prevalent to Eastern Africa and game areas.
- The chronic form, known as ‘Gambian’ is typically found in areas that are humid and close to water such as rivers and lake shores.

How is it spread?
The Tsetse Fly is the host for the parasite, which is transmitted by biting. The fly bites during daylight and is attracted to brighter colours, particularly the colour blue. It’s caused by a small parasite that leads to a serious infection in the brain.

When are holidaymakers at risk from African Sleeping Sickness?
Whilst in Africa where the fly is rampant particular care should be taken during game reserve drives and when near to lush watersides.

For more information on African Sleeping Sickness Illness please call:
0808 143 1353
Or visit www.smholidayclaims.co.uk

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Treatment:
The earlier the disease is identified, the better the prospect of a cure, which involves a variety of drastic remedies in the form of drugs. Professional medical instruction is always advised.

How can I prevent it?
Minimise exposure to the Tsetse Fly in rural areas. Although it's not easy in hot climates, long-sleeved clothing, full length trousers and thick socks will stop insects biting you. There's no vaccine due to the relative toxicity of the drugs, so it's necessary to prevent bites and control the places where the Tsetse Fly lives in the affected areas.

Hazard areas:
Agricultural, fishing or hunting areas.

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TIPS

1. Wear a good deal of insect repellent ensuring all areas of the body are protected including where clothes cover.

2. Dress in clothing that will protect all areas of the body, the more skin you have on show, the more chance you have of being bitten.

3. Steer clear of food scraps, when they rot they will attract Tsetse Flies.