

Malaria Kills



Malaria is a disease caused by the blood parasite Plasmodium, which is transmitted by mosquitoes. Malaria, from the Medieval Italian words mala aria or “bad air,” causes 350 million to 500 million illnesses per year and kills more than one million people – mostly children under the age of five.

Malaria is particularly devastating in Africa, where it is a leading killer of children. In fact, there are 10 new cases of malaria every second. Every 30 seconds, a child in Africa dies from a malaria infection.

Malaria is also the number one killer of refugees in Africa. *Nothing But Nets* is working closely with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to send urgently-needed insecticide-treated bed nets to more than one million refugees in 15 countries. [Learn more about our work to protect refugees here.](#)

Forty percent of the world’s population lives in malaria endemic countries, and its treatment consumes nearly 40 percent of these countries’ public health resources. In addition to the burden on local healthcare systems, malaria illness and death costs Africa approximately \$12 billion per year in lost productivity. The effects permeate almost every sector. Malaria:

- Increases school absenteeism
- Decreases tourism
- Inhibits foreign investment
- Affects crop production

Malaria has been brought under control and even eliminated in many parts of Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Yet in Africa, with increasing drug resistance and struggling health systems, malaria infections have increased over the last three decades.

Malaria is Both Preventable and Treatable

While malaria remains one of the deadliest diseases on the African continent, infections can be prevented either by spraying insecticides indoors or by sleeping under long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets. Additionally, anti-malarial drugs, such as artemisinin and other combination therapies (if used early enough) can be used to treat malaria once it is contracted.

Long-Lasting Insecticide-Treated Bed Nets

Bed nets work by creating a protective barrier against deadly-malaria carrying mosquitoes that bite at night. A family of four can sleep under an insecticide-treated bed net, safe from malaria, for four to five years. The benefits of bed nets extend even further than protecting those sleeping

underneath them. The insecticide woven into each net makes entire communities safer – killing and repelling mosquitoes so that they can't go on to bite others who may not be protected by a net.

Although \$10 for a bed net may not sound like much, the cost makes them out of reach for most people at risk of malaria, many of whom survive on less than \$1 a day. Nets are a simple, life-saving solution, but we need your help to provide them to those in need. Join us now. Send a net and save a life.

Anti-Malarial Drugs

Artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs) are the most effective drugs currently available for treating malaria. ACTs and other drugs can be used by pregnant women to prevent malaria-related low birth weight, which accounts for nearly 100,000 infant deaths annually in Africa.

Other Preventative Measures

In addition to using long-lasting nets, malaria can be prevented through a process known as Indoor Residual Spraying, or IRS. During IRS campaigns, insecticide is applied to the inside walls of individual homes. Mosquitoes that land on the walls of these homes are then killed, preventing the transmission of malaria. In special circumstances, teams are also organized to eliminate or treat mosquito breeding sites.

More Facts about Malaria

- Malaria is only transmitted by female mosquitoes of the genus *Anopheles*. Most female *Anopheles* mosquitoes are nocturnal feeders (that is, they only bite at night).
- Four Nobel Prizes have been awarded for work associated with malaria to Sir Ronald Ross (1902), Charles Louis Alphonse Laveran (1907), Julius Wagner-Jauregg (1927), and Paul Hermann Müller (1948).
- The two most effective and potent anti-malarial drugs come from plants with medicinal values recognized for centuries: artemisinin from the Qinghao plant (*Artemisia annua*, China, 4th century) and quinine from the cinchona tree (South America, 17th century). When combined with HIV/AIDS, malaria is even more deadly, particularly for pregnant women and children. Read more here.

***FACT CHECKED BY THE US CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)**