



# MALARIA



## WHAT IS MALARIA?

Malaria is a disease caused by parasites of the Plasmodium species. It is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. The parasite enters the bloodstream and causes fever, headaches and other flu-like symptoms. If left untreated, the infection in its most severe forms can lead to permanent learning disabilities, coma and death.

## WHO DOES MALARIA AFFECT?

Malaria disproportionately affects the poor and vulnerable, primarily young children and pregnant women in Africa who are more likely to be exposed to infection due to lower immunity levels and have the most limited access to malaria prevention, treatment, and control measures.

- Malaria kills a child in Africa every 45 seconds and overall nearly 780,000 people each year.
- Approximately half of the world's population is at risk of malaria.
- More than 90 percent of malaria deaths occur in Africa; 85 percent of these are children under 5 years of age.
- In addition to the death toll, malaria limits economic development; malaria illness and death cost Africa at least \$12 billion in lost productivity every year.

The widespread prevalence of malaria compelled the United Nations to set international targets to halt deaths from this devastating disease by 2015. Addressing malaria will also make a critical contribution to achieving other international targets including eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health.

## CAN WE REDUCE MALARIA DEATHS?

YES, malaria is a preventable and treatable disease. Simple tools like treated mosquito nets, effective medicines and safe indoor spraying can save lives.

According to a 2011 Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership report, significant advances in recent years have demonstrated that the tide is turning on malaria and the rigid grip it once held over the African continent.



In the last 10 years:

- 1.1 million African children under the age of 5 have been saved from death after contracting malaria.
- Progress toward developing malaria vaccines has accelerated greatly, resulting from heightened awareness of their effectiveness and a 10-fold increase in funding.
- At least 11 endemic countries in Africa successfully cut malaria cases by 50 percent or more.
- Global malaria deaths have been reduced by approximately 38 percent.

Thanks to global commitments, malaria control efforts have had an impact in all endemic regions, but these gains are fragile, and sustained momentum is crucial. The fight is not yet won.

## **THE CHALLENGE AHEAD**

A malaria-free world is the vision that drives the global malaria community in its day-to-day efforts to combat the disease. By focusing resources and skills on reducing global malaria deaths and cases, this vision can become a reality. According to the RBM Partnership, this practice requires sustained focus on targets, including:

- Universal access to and utilization of prevention measures: Long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets and safe indoor residual spraying can help prevent malaria cases.
- Accelerated development of surveillance systems: Efficient monitoring and evaluation methods/structures can gather much needed intelligence from current and future malaria control programs.
- Ensuring universal access to case management for communities, as well as the public and private sector: Widespread use of rapid diagnostic tests and artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs), as well as pre-natal clinic visits can help guarantee timely and adequate treatment.

Above all, for these goals and targets to be met, malaria must remain a global health priority, across all sectors.

**JOIN OUR TEAM. WE HAVE THE TOOLS AND THE MOMENTUM.  
UNITED, WE CAN BEAT MALARIA.**

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