MALARIA: Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS MALARIA?
Malaria is a preventable and treatable infectious disease transmitted by mosquitoes that needlessly kills more than one million people each year, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa. Malaria is actually a parasite. The most common (and deadly) type is called *Plasmodium falciparum*.

- Malaria is the leading cause of death for children under five in sub-Saharan Africa
- More than one million of the 350–500 million cases of malaria each year results in death
- Pregnant women and their unborn children are particularly vulnerable
- Malaria-related illness and mortality costs Africa's economy $12 billion per year

HOW DO YOU PREVENT MALARIA?
Pregnant women can take anti-malarial drugs at antenatal clinics to protect themselves and their unborn children from malaria. People at risk, especially children under five and pregnant women, can sleep under insecticide-treated nets (ITNs). In addition, spraying walls inside some homes in Africa with insecticides—a process called indoor-residual spraying (IRS)—kills mosquitoes that carry malaria.

HOW DO YOU TREAT MALARIA?
International health experts now recommend Artemisinin-based Combination Therapies (ACTs), which are derived from a Chinese plant and are highly effective against malaria. However, the parasite that causes malaria can develop resistance, and researchers are constantly looking for new anti-malarial compounds.

ARE THESE INTERVENTIONS EXPENSIVE?
A long-lasting ITN costs less than $10 and protects up to two people from infection for five years. That $10 includes not only the net, but the cost of distributing it, teaching people how to use it properly, and monitoring its usage. For less than $6, an adult with malaria can be cured with ACTs.

WHAT IS BEING DONE NOW?
Funding for malaria control has increased tenfold since the year 2000 because of efforts such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative, and new malaria financing efforts by donors. These increased resources resulted in more than 76 million

WHY SHOULD I CARE?
Because malaria is a global emergency that affects mostly poor women and children—one of whom dies every 30 seconds—malaria perpetuates a vicious cycle of poverty in the developing world.

HOW CAN I HELP?
You can take action to ensure that everyone living in countries with malaria has access to life-saving interventions. Resources, political commitment, and continued research are all needed to continue the fight against malaria.
insecticide-treated bednets being procured in 2006. Of those, the Global Fund delivered 18 million, saving an estimated 300,000 lives. More than 100 million doses of ACTs were procured in 2006, double the number procured in 2005.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE FIGHT?
Governments in Malaria-endemic countries, foundations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and the research community are all working together to control this disease. The Roll Back Malaria Partnership—which includes the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP, and the Global Fund—is charged with coordinating all the partners fighting malaria.

HOW MUCH IS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS?
Global estimates indicate $4.2 billion is needed each year to fully fund the fight against malaria. This would support current malaria control and prevention efforts, plus finance research for an effective malaria vaccine, new treatment drugs, and improved insecticides.

Contacts for further details:
The Roll Back Malaria Partnership: www.rollbackmalaria.org
The President's Malaria Initiative: www.fightingmalaria.gov

Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs' Global Program on Malaria: www.malariafreefuture.org

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