

TEN FACTS ABOUT MALARIA



Fact 1

Malaria can be transmitted to people of all ages. It is caused by plasmodium parasites that spread through the bites of infected mosquitoes. If not treated promptly with effective medicines, malaria often is fatal.

Fact 2

About 3.3 billion people - half of the world's population - are at risk of malaria. Every year, this leads to about 250 million malaria cases and 880,000 deaths. People living in the poorest countries are the most vulnerable.

Fact 3

One in five (20 percent) of all childhood deaths in Africa are due to malaria. An African child has on average between 1.6 and 5.4 episodes of malaria each year. Every 30 seconds a child dies from malaria in Africa.

Fact 4

Early diagnosis and prompt treatment are two basic elements of malaria control. Early and effective treatment of malaria can shorten the duration of the infection and prevent further complications including most deaths. Access to disease management must be recognized as a fundamental right of all populations at risk.

Fact 5

In the past, misuse of antimalarial drugs increased the resistance of the malaria parasite. New antimalarials – known as artemisinin-based combination therapies – have brought renewed hope in the fight against malaria.

Fact 6

Malaria vector control aims to reduce significantly the rate and number of cases of malaria infection. This is achieved by controlling the malaria-bearing mosquito and thereby reducing or interrupting transmission.

Fact 7

Insecticide-treated nets provide personal protection to risk groups, especially young children and pregnant women. When communities have high enough coverage (more than 80 percent covered), the nets help reduce malaria rates throughout the entire community. With proper use, nets can be effective for three to five years.

Fact 8

Indoor residual spraying is the most effective, quickest means of reducing mosquito density. Its full potential is obtained when at least 80 percent of premises with malaria vectors are sprayed. Indoor spraying is effective for three to six months (DDT is effective for longer periods, up to 12 months in some cases).

Fact 9

Malaria puts pregnant women at risk of death, spontaneous abortion, premature delivery or stillbirth. Malaria contributes to the deaths of up to 10,000 pregnant women and 200,000 infants each year in Africa alone.

Fact 10

Malaria traps communities in a downward spiral of poverty, disproportionately affecting those who cannot afford treatment or have limited access to health care. Malaria has lifelong effects through increased poverty and impaired learning. It cuts attendance at schools and workplaces. However, it is preventable and curable.

Based on the following: http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/malaria/malaria_facts/en/index9.html