



TEN MALARIA FACTS

Fact 1

Malaria is a disease which can be transmitted to people of all ages. It is caused by parasites of the species plasmodium that are spread from person to person 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. It is estimated that an African child has on average between 1.6 and 5.4 episodes of malaria fever 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. One should view access to disease management not only as a component of malaria control but also as a fundamental right of all populations at risk.

Fact 5

Inappropriate use of antimalarial drugs in the past century contributed to widespread resistance in the malaria parasite to drugs such as chloroquine, leading to rising rates of sickness and death. Over the past decade, a new group of antimalarials – known as artemisinin-based combination therapies – has brought new hope in the fight against malaria.

Fact 6

The main objective of malaria vector control is to reduce significantly the rate and number of cases of both parasite infection and clinical malaria. This is achieved by controlling the malaria-bearing mosquito and thereby reducing or interrupting transmission.

Fact 7

Long-lasting insecticidal nets provide protection to risk groups, especially young children and pregnant women in high-transmission areas. This provides personal protection. The nets can also protect communities when coverage is high enough (more than 80 percent of people in a target community sleeping inside the nets). The nets are effective for three to five years, depending on models and conditions of use.

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, depending on the insecticide used and the type of surface on which it is sprayed. (DDT is effective for longer periods, up to 12 months in some cases).

Fact 9

Pregnant women are at high risk not only of dying from the complications of severe malaria, but also of spontaneous abortion, premature delivery or stillbirth. Malaria also can cause severe maternal anemia and is responsible for about one-third of preventable low birth-weight babies. It contributes to the deaths of an estimated 10,000 pregnant women and up to 200,000 infants each year in Africa alone.

Fact 10

Malaria causes an average loss of 1.3 percent of annual economic growth in countries with intense transmission. It traps families and communities in a downward spiral of poverty, disproportionately affecting marginalized and poor people who cannot afford treatment or who 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.

http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/malaria/malaria_facts/en/index9.html