

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Imagine No Malaria?

In 2008, the General Conference adopted global health as an area of focus for the entire denomination. The Global Health Initiative is the vehicle through which we will work to counter the devastating effects of diseases of poverty. Imagine No Malaria, a program of the Global Health Initiative, is a global health effort with a focus squarely on the goal of eliminating malaria forever. Imagine No Malaria will direct resources, supplies and the passion of our people to Africa to save lives.

How is Imagine No Malaria different from Nothing But Nets?

Imagine No Malaria is The United Methodist Church's comprehensive effort to end death and suffering from malaria. The great success of Nothing But Nets demonstrated our capacity to provide a sustainable solution to malaria's burden on Africa. We know, however, that while nets can reduce malaria cases, prevention alone cannot eliminate this disease. Education and communication about malaria, and adequate resources to treat the disease are also necessary elements.

What can we do besides providing nets to help eliminate malaria?

We can promote malaria education in sub-Saharan Africa by training more community health workers in recognizing and treating malaria. Our health-delivery systems can be strengthened with adequate medicine and equipment to treat malaria infections. We can increase communications on diseases of poverty through United Methodist radio networks, heard on hand-crank radios we are providing in communities across Africa. We can continue to distribute bed nets that, when used properly by 80% of a community, can actually reduce malaria rates throughout the entire community. These activities, when combined, will inevitably create a path to a stronger infrastructure, coordinated communications networks and human-resource bases.

In addition, our efforts to eliminate malaria will build the capacity of our church in Africa to address a much wider range of health initiatives: combating HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, lowering maternal mortality rates and preparing community health workers.

Why is this effort focused on malaria?

Every 30 seconds, a child dies from malaria. In some parts of Africa, only one in five children will live to see their fifth birthday. Malaria disproportionately affects young children and pregnant women. The people of The United Methodist Church have the unique opportunity to put our discipleship into action to make a difference. Malaria is a treatable and preventable disease and it is a fight we can win.

What is malaria, really?

After a female Anopheles mosquito feeds on a person infected with malaria, it transmits the *Plasmodium falciparum* parasite that causes malaria to the next person on whom it feeds. The Anopheles mosquito only feeds at night. Once in the body, the parasite invades the liver and multiplies, eventually bursting the liver cells and sending parasites out to attack more red blood cells. Symptoms of malaria often appear about seven days after the initial bite, and include high fever (in some cases up to and above 106 degrees), chills, headache, sweats, fatigue, nausea, and vomiting.

Malaria can cause fever-induced comas that, if survived, often cause permanent brain damage and learning disabilities. The loss of red blood cells induces anemia, for which a common treatment is a blood transfusion. If the hospital or clinic providing treatment does not have the adequate resources to screen the blood for transfusion, the malaria patient may be at risk for contracting HIV/AIDS. However, if treatment for malaria is sought quickly, the disease can be treated.

Why are we focusing on Africa?

Today, more than 90 percent of the deaths caused by malaria occur in sub-Saharan Africa. Malaria was eliminated in the United States in the 1950s, but it remains a serious health issue across the globe, particularly in developing African countries. In Africa, increasing drug resistance and frail health systems have actually led to an increase in malaria infections over the past three decades. The United Methodist Church has been operating hospitals and clinics across Africa for more than 160 years. We have the unique ability to reach the most remote areas, providing care and treatment where people need it most.

What impact can we really have?

Malaria is a treatable and entirely preventable disease. The world already possesses the treatment and preventative measures to eliminate deaths from malaria. As recently as the 1950's, malaria was a health issue in the United States – but a dedicated effort eliminated it in this country. By sharing that blessing with the developing world, we have an opportunity to collaborate in a global effort to overcome malaria – a goal world leaders hope to accomplish by 2015.

How is Imagine No Malaria reaching out to the people of The United Methodist Church?

Imagine No Malaria is an extraordinary grassroots effort of The United Methodist Church to raise \$75 million to fight malaria in Africa. With more than 11.5 million members, we have the opportunity to engage many people in a small way to make a big impact. During the coming months and years, we will be working directly with conferences to conduct Imagine No Malaria efforts at the local level. Resources will be available to aid in planning fun and educational activities designed to engage the entire church body in the fight against malaria.

Imagine No Malaria is more than an opportunity for our members to unify faith and works. It is a chance to bless our world by fulfilling our Wesleyan tradition of doing all the good we can to all the people we can.

With whom is The United Methodist Church collaborating on this endeavor?

The United Methodist Church is blessed to work with several key partners in the fight against malaria. With support from the United Nations Foundation (UNF), The United Methodist Church was offered the opportunity to conduct a fund-raising and educational campaign.

Because The United Methodist Church has been operating hospitals and clinics across Africa for more than 160 years, we have the unique ability to reach the most remote areas, providing care and treatment where people need it most.

In addition, the effort will support United Methodist malaria projects and programs in Africa and establishes a strategic partnership between The United Methodist Church and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is recognized as the world's leading funder of malaria prevention and treatment. This partnership with the Global Fund links The United Methodist Church with one-quarter of international funding for AIDS programs, as well as two-thirds of international malaria and tuberculosis funding in the developing world.