

Malaria: Reading two

Malaria remains the most common infective killer throughout the _____1_____ and each year _____2_____ people are affected by it, with between _____3_____ million of these people dying. Around _____4_____ % of these deaths occur in _____5_____, mostly in young _____6_____.

_____7_____ women are also more vulnerable to malaria. Other countries that suffer from malaria include: _____8_____ in South America, and Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and _____9_____ in Asia.

Malaria is both curable and _____10_____, but what is being done to control this deadly disease? At the moment there is still no _____11_____. One of the main problems is that malaria is not a viral disease (like chickenpox for example) but caused by a _____12_____. Until an effective _____13_____ is developed it is important to prevent malaria in other ways.

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- 1 Bednets coated in insecticide have reduced the incidence of the disease by up to 35%, according to the World Health Organisation. It has proven to be particularly effective in reducing child mortality in sub-Saharan Africa. Not only are the mosquitoes unable to bite the sleeping person, they are reluctant to land on the net in the first place. Nets need to be re-treated every 6 months to remain really effective. Not just the beds but the whole house should be screened if possible to keep mosquitoes from entering and leaving a building. It also keeps flies away. Screens can be put on windows and doors.
 - 2 Taking drugs can help too but this method cannot be used on its own. Drugs can eliminate the parasites so that if a person is later bitten by another mosquito the transmission of malaria is reduced. However, the symptoms of malaria are not always clear so the disease can be spread without people knowing they are infected. In addition chloroquine, a safe and cheap drug, is no longer as effective as it used to be. This has happened through overusing anti malarial drugs.
 - 3 Covering up helps too. Mosquitoes like exposed skin so wearing long sleeved tops and trousers is a good idea especially in the early evening when the insects are looking for their supper.

- 4 Using mosquito repellents is extremely advisable. However, this is more appropriate for those travelling to, or those who are temporarily in, affected countries. For those people who live in malaria zones this method is simply too expensive.
- 5 Similar to repellents is the use of mosquito mats and coils. But again these can be expensive for local people, and in addition some people are allergic to the smoke.
- 6 Fish too can also help to control malaria. In India the World Bank has a programme using guppies and as a result the fish have almost eliminated the *Anopheles* mosquito from some districts. How does this work? It's simple: fish which like eating mosquito larvae are put in ponds, rivers and wells where mosquitoes lay their eggs. The eggs hatch, and the fish eat the larvae. The advantages are twofold. Firstly the mosquitoes have become resistant to insecticides like DDT, and secondly it is not an expensive programme. Supplying ponds with guppies is a lot cheaper than using insecticide, although it is more effective in some regions than others. There is also a small fish called, appropriately, a mosquito fish, which is particularly effective in small ponds or water tanks.
- 7 The spread of the disease can also be reduced by cutting down the mosquito population through eliminating stagnant water where mosquitoes breed. For example, flowerpots are very popular with mosquitoes, and so are ditches which should be filled.
- 8 And it seems that mosquitoes prefer to bite water buffaloes rather than humans. But in the monsoon season the buffaloes get covered in mud which the mosquitoes don't like. The insects start biting people more instead. So keeping your water buffalo clean helps too!