

Lymphatic Filariasis

A neglected tropical disease

Accessible version: <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/>



Lymphatic filariasis is a parasitic disease caused by microscopic worms. It is spread from the bite of an infected mosquito that has previously ingested blood from an infected person. Over time, people with untreated lymphatic filariasis may experience debilitating disfiguration from swelling caused by fluid build-up in the body, including severe swelling of the arms and legs (lymphedema), enlargement and hardening of an area of body (elephantiasis), and swelling of the scrotum in men (hydrocele). These chronic manifestations of lymphatic filariasis may develop several years after infection, negatively impacting an individual's quality of life.

Lymphatic filariasis is found in **72 countries** across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands, and South America, with over **51 million people** infected.

Over
16
million

men and women
have lymphedema.

An
estimated
19
million

men live with
hydrocele.

17
countries

have eliminated
lymphatic filariasis
as a public health
problem.

692
million

people no
longer require
preventative
medication for
lymphatic filariasis.

859
million

people globally
remain at risk for
lymphatic filariasis.

CDC ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT ELIMINATION OF LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS

CDC supports WHO's strategy of the Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis through:



Diagnostic Advancement:

We develop and validate new diagnostic tools and evaluate existing tests for lymphatic filariasis to measure progress towards elimination.



Morbidity Management & Disability Prevention:

We help develop programs that teach people to care for their lymphedema, reducing suffering and disability.



Preventative Treatment:

We assist in getting people at risk for lymphatic filariasis medicines to stop the spread of the infection (mass drug administration).



Monitoring & Evaluation/ Surveillance:

We measure progress and impact towards disease elimination.

ADDITIONAL WORK NEEDED TO ELIMINATE LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM



Explore strategies for early detection of new cases to eliminate lymphatic filariasis more rapidly.



Improve the ability for eligible people to access and take preventative medicines.



Develop tools to help countries expand access to morbidity management and disability prevention.



Improve availability of affordable diagnostics.

DEMONSTRATED SUCCESS



- CDC, in collaboration with Haiti's Ministry of Public Health and Population, investigated the safety and efficacy of the combination of three anti-parasitic drugs (ivermectin, diethylcarbamazine and albendazole – called IDA) during a clinical trial in Haiti. The trial contributed to WHO's IDA recommendation for mass drug administration. In 2020, 15.7 million people in 5 countries were treated with IDA.
- Since 2018, CDC and the Pacific Island Health Officers Association have supported the American Samoa Department of Health to carry out two successful rounds of mass drug administration.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about CDC's work to prevent, control, and eliminate parasitic diseases, visit www.cdc.gov/parasites

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