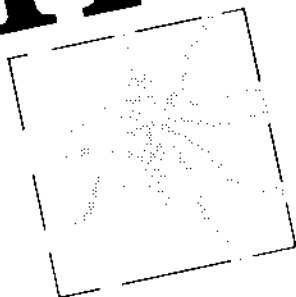


What every family and community has  
a right to know about

# Malaria



## **Note to communicators**

In areas where malaria is common, all families and communities should have access to today's information on preventing and treating the disease.

The six prime health messages in this chapter could help to prevent the tragedy of 100 million malaria cases each year, causing hundreds of thousands of child deaths and many more cases of child malnutrition.

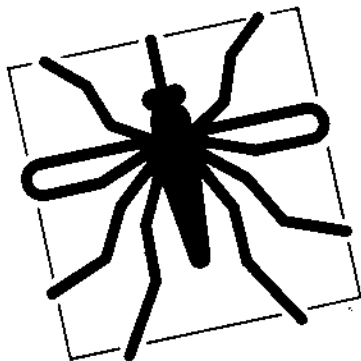
Communicators should also be aware that the effective prevention of malaria depends upon community action and government support.

# Malaria Prime Messages

- 1** Young children should be protected from mosquito bites, especially at night.
- 2** Communities should destroy mosquito larvae and prevent mosquitoes from breeding.
- 3** Wherever malaria is common, pregnant women should take anti-malarial tablets throughout pregnancy.
- 4** Wherever malaria is common, a child who has a fever should be taken immediately to a health worker. If malaria appears to be the cause, the child should be given a full course of an anti-malarial drug.

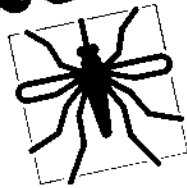
**5** A child with a fever should be kept cool but not cold.

**6** A child recovering from malaria needs plenty of liquids and food.



**Malaria**

# **Supporting Information**



## **1**

**Young children should be protected from mosquito bites, especially at night.**

○ Malaria is spread by the bite of a mosquito. Care should be taken to keep mosquitoes away from young children. There are several ways of doing this:

- by using bed nets (preferably impregnated with a mosquito repellent)
- by using fumigants such as mosquito coils
- by putting screens on house windows and doors
- by killing mosquitoes in the house.

○ All members of the community should be protected against mosquito bites. A mosquito can take malaria from an infected person and pass it on to someone who is uninfected.

## **2**

**Communities should destroy mosquito larvae and prevent mosquitoes from breeding.**

○ Mosquitoes breed wherever stagnant water can collect: in ponds, swamps, pools, pits, drains, sometimes even tin cans and hoof-prints. They may also breed along the edges of streams, in overhead tanks, and in rice fields. Filling in or draining places where water collects can kill the mosquito larvae. Overhead tanks can be covered. The larvae in rice fields can be killed by alternately drying out the field and introducing larvae-eating fish into the water.

○ Regular clean-ups of the neighbourhood help to reduce mosquito breeding.

# 3

**Wherever malaria is common, pregnant women should take anti-malarial tablets throughout pregnancy.**

- Pregnant women are more than twice as likely to suffer from malaria. The disease is also more dangerous during pregnancy. It can lead to severe anaemia ('thin blood'), and may cause a miscarriage, premature birth, or stillbirth. Babies born to women with malaria are also very likely to be small, weak, and vulnerable to infections.
- Pregnant women can be effectively protected against malaria by taking anti-malarial tablets regularly throughout pregnancy.
- Anti-malarial tablets should be obtained from a clinic or health worker as not all anti-malarials are safe to take during pregnancy.

# 4

**Wherever malaria is common, a child who has a fever should be taken immediately to a health worker. If malaria appears to be the cause, the child should be given a full course of an anti-malarial drug.**

- A child with a fever, believed to be caused by malaria, should be given a course of anti-malarial tablets (young babies may be given an anti-malarial syrup). Treatment for malaria should begin immediately. Even a day's delay can be fatal. A health worker can advise on what type of treatment is best and how long it should last.
- A child should be given the full course of treatment, even if the fever disappears rapidly.
- If the symptoms continue, the child should be taken to a health centre or hospital - the malaria may be resistant to the drugs.

# 5

**A child with a fever should be kept cool but not cold.**

- Children with fever should be kept cool by:
  - giving a temperature-reducing medicine (such as paracetamol)
  - sponging or bathing with cool (not cold) water
  - not putting too many clothes or blankets on the child.

# 6

**A child recovering from malaria needs plenty of liquids and food.**

○ Malaria burns up energy, and the child loses a lot of liquid through sweating. As soon as the child can take food and drink again, these losses should be replaced. Plenty of food and liquid, when the child is recovering from malaria, will help to prevent malnutrition and dehydration.