



Definition

NTDs are a group of parasitic and bacterial diseases that infect approximately one in six people worldwide, including more than half a billion children.

- 1 Lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis)
- 2 Onchocerciasis (river blindness)
- 3 Trachoma
- 4 Schistosomiasis (snail fever)
- 5 Trichuriasis (whipworm)
- 6 Ascariasis (roundworm)
- 7 Hookworm

Why NTDs Matter

NTD control is linked to successful outcomes in nearly every global health and development issue. These diseases prevent children from growing and learning and they reduce adults' economic productivity and ability to care for their families. Without NTD control, many families and communities become trapped in a cycle of disease and poverty.



Health

NTDs can cause blindness, horrible swelling of the limbs and even death. For instance, schistosomiasis is the second largest parasitic killer after malaria, while trachoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness. NTDs can increase susceptibility to diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, and hinder the treatment of these diseases.



Education

Children with NTDs are often too sick to attend or perform well in school, and even healthy children can miss out on a chance at education if they have to care for parents or siblings who have NTDs. Studies have shown that school absenteeism decreases by up to 25 percent when deworming medicine is provided to students.



Economic Development

NTDs are debilitating and prevent adults from working and caring for their families. Evidence suggests that treating hookworm alone can increase future wage earnings by up to 43 percent.



Hunger and Nutrition

Anemia and malnutrition are common side effects of several NTDs. Even when people have enough food to eat, NTDs rob their bodies of nutrients that they need. Children who suffer from anemia and malnutrition are particularly vulnerable to delays in physical and cognitive development.



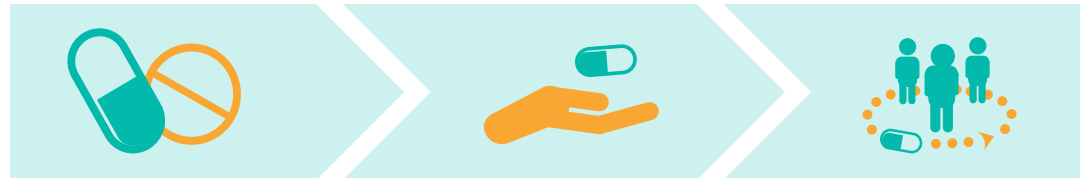
Women's Empowerment

Most of the NTDs have more severe effects on women and girls. In particular, pregnant women with NTDs have a higher risk for infection, miscarriage and death. More than 16 million women and girls in

Africa have female genital schistosomiasis (FGS), making them three times more likely to become infected with HIV/AIDS than those without FGS.

A Simple, Cost-Effective Solution

The good news is that NTDs can easily be treated and controlled.



Pharmaceutical industry partners have donated billions of pills, enough to meet global treatment requirements for the most common NTDs.

Pills are distributed to at-risk communities through mass drug administration, a process where an entire community receives treatment each year until the disease is controlled.

Treatment programs are so simple that doctors are not required to implement and sustain these programs. Community health workers, teachers and other volunteers can work with local government partners to implement these programs with minimal training.

The Bottom Line

The donation of medicine by pharmaceutical partners helps lower the cost of treatment significantly. Most expenses are limited to transporting NTD pills within endemic countries, training community health workers and conducting program monitoring and evaluation activities. **As a result, we can treat and protect one person from all seven NTDs for about 50 cents per year.**