

# Malaria - What can we do?

Malaria is an infection that is spread by a mosquito's bite. There are 125,000 cases of malaria each year in Kenya resulting in the death of over 26,000 children aged below 5 years.

Not only does malaria severely affect the health of Kenyans, it is a barrier to economic development and growth. By following a few simple measures malaria can be prevented and with proper medical treatment almost all cases can be cured.

## Things you can do at home to prevent malaria

- Purchase and use insecticide treated nets and re-treat them at regular intervals.
  - Do not wash insecticide treated nets before the next treatment is due
  - Using treated mosquito nets has been shown to decrease malaria related deaths by 20%
- Reduce the number of places where mosquitoes can breed, by
  - removing empty containers like tins.
  - Draining pools of water near their dwelling places.
- Screening doors and windows at home against mosquitoes (where practical)

## Symptoms of malaria include

- Fever, or a history of fever lasting a few days
- Headache
- Feeling cold and sometimes shivering
- Body and joint pains
- Abdominal pains, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting
- Loss of appetite

If you suspect malaria take the patient to the nearest healthcare facility immediately, as malaria can be fatal in as little as 2 days in young children.

## Malaria Treatment

- The Ministry of health recommends that first-line malaria treatment should be with SP drugs eg Fansidar, Orodar, Laridox or Metakelfin; these are available at most shops and drug stores.

-Paracetamol can also be given to reduce the fever.

-It is very important to complete any treatment that is started to ensure cure.

Age of Patient	Number of tablets of <b>SP</b> As a <b>SINGLE DOSE</b>
under 1 year	1/2
1 – 4 years	1
5 – 8 years	1 1/2
9 – 14 years	2
above 15 years	3

## Malaria in pregnancy

- It is extremely important that women attend ante-natal clinics

regularly during their pregnancy as this will prevent many deaths and results in healthier babies.

- Malaria is especially dangerous during pregnancy and these regular ante-natal check-ups can reduce illness in the mother and the baby,

- Women that are pregnant should receive intermittent anti-malarial treatment during the pregnancy to prevent infection and make sure that they sleep under a treated mosquito net.

- Any woman that is pregnant who thinks that they may have malaria should immediately visit a health-care worker.

The Shikunga Health-care clinic offers a range of health-care services. For more information, please feel free to speak to the nurse or clinical officer at Shikunga Health-care clinic.

Any questions asked will be kept confidential and you will be treated with respect and dignity.