



Lymphatic Filariasis

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare launched the first phase of the Bi-annual Nationwide [Mass Drug Administration \(MDA\) campaign](#) for [Lymphatic filariasis \(LF\)](#) elimination.

Key Points

- Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis, is a [Neglected Tropical Disease \(NTD\)](#) caused by infection with filarial parasites transmitted through mosquitoes.
- In 2021, approximately **882.5 million people in 44 countries** lived in areas requiring preventive chemotherapy to halt the spread of infection.
- LF is a **serious public health problem in India**. Currently, there are 345 lymphatic filariasis endemic districts in 20 states and union territories of the country.
 - **75% of MDA districts are from 5 states Bihar, Jharkhand, UP, Odisha and Telangana.**
- LF is more prevalent among the urban poor and affects all segments of the rural population.
- The **infection starts in childhood** and accumulates through adulthood, resulting in irreversible chronic disease conditions.
 - The disease inflicts stigma, mental suffering, social deprivation and economic loss and is a major cause of poverty in the affected communities.
- It is **caused by infection with parasites classified as nematodes** (roundworms) of the family Filariodidea. There are 3 types of these thread-like filarial worms:
 - Wuchereria bancrofti (responsible for 90% of the cases)
 - Brugia malayi (causes most of the remainder of the cases)
 - Brugia timori (which also causes the disease)
- **India's Initiatives:**
 - MDA Campaign twice a year synchronized with National Deworming Day (10th Feb and 10th August)
 - India is committed to eliminating LF by 2027, three years before the global target.

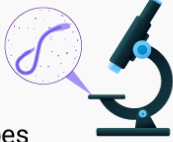
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DISEASE

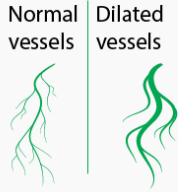
Infection

Filarial parasites spread by mosquitoes



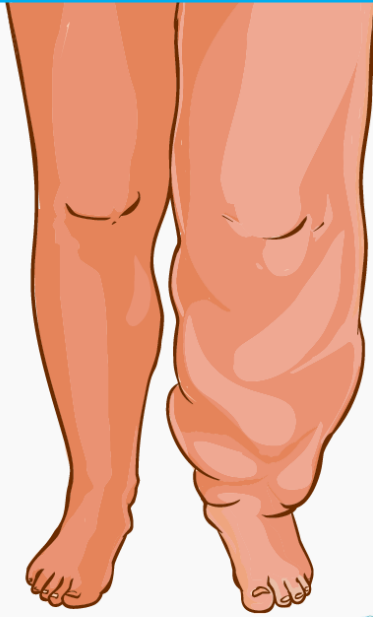
Disease

Impairs function of lymphatic vessels



856 Million people

AT RISK



ELIMINATION



Large-scale treatment of all at-risk populations can stop spread of infection



Vector control can supplement impact of large-scale treatment



Morbidity management & disability prevention to alleviate suffering due to disease

- **6.7 billion** treatments delivered (2000-2016)
- **499 million** people no longer require treatment
- Prevented or cured more than **97 million cases**
- **US\$ 100 billion** averted lifetime economic loss

Lymphatic Filariasis eliminated as a public health problem in 10 countries