



## Chagas Disease

[Source: WHO](#)

Recently, the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) observed [World Chagas Disease Day](#) on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024 to raise awareness about the little-known disease that affects millions of people, especially in Latin America.

- The theme for the year 2024 is “ **Tackling Chagas Disease: Detect Early and Care for Life**”.
- [Chagas disease](#) also known as "**silent or silenced disease**", is a **communicable parasitic disease** that infects 6-7 million people and claims around 12,000 lives every year worldwide, according to WHO.
  - It is caused by the **protozoan parasite** named ***Trypanosoma cruzi***.
  - It can also be contracted through **congenital transmission**, [blood transfusions](#), organ transplantation, consumption of uncooked food contaminated with faecal matter of infected bugs, or accidental laboratory exposure.
  - It cannot propagate by casual contact with infected humans or animals.
- The disease manifests as **fever, headaches, rashes, inflammatory nodules**, nausea or [diarrhoea](#), and muscle or abdominal pain.
- There are currently no [vaccines](#) available for Chagas disease, but [antiparasitic medicines](#) **Benznidazole** and **Nifurtimox** can treat the disease.

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# The Global Fight Against CHAGAS DISEASE



**Chagas disease is caused by** the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi* and is spread by infected triatomine bugs. It can cause **serious heart and gastrointestinal problems.**

**7 million**

living with Chagas in the Americas

The parasite that causes Chagas disease is found only in the Americas, where an estimated 7 million people are infected.<sup>1</sup> In the United States, more than 300,000 people are living with the disease.<sup>2</sup>

**300,000**

living with Chagas in the U.S.



Chagas disease causes approximately

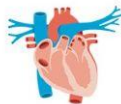
**10,000 deaths** per year globally.<sup>3</sup>

Up to **30%** of infected people develop symptoms.

Chagas disease can cause



stroke



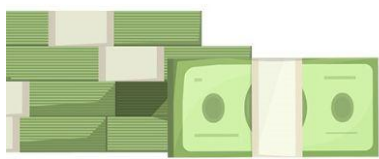
heart attack



sudden death



Women infected with *T. cruzi* can pass the disease to their unborn baby.

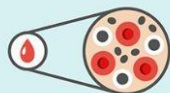


Chagas disease accounts for at least **\$627 million** in global healthcare-related costs annually.<sup>4</sup>

## Global efforts to stop Chagas disease include:



Spraying insecticides to eliminate triatomine bugs where they live, in parts of Mexico, Central America, and South America.



Screening blood to prevent spreading the disease through blood transfusions. Widespread screening of the U.S. blood supply for *T. cruzi* began in 2007.



Improved screening of and treatment for Chagas disease, including identification of pregnant mothers with *T. cruzi* infection whose babies may be at risk.



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