WHAT IS LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS?

Lymphatic filariasis is caused by thin parasitic worms transmitted to humans by the bites of mosquitoes in tropical and subtropical regions. These worms damage the lymphatic system, resulting in fluid collection in the tissues—most commonly the legs and genitalia—causing severe swelling and periodic fevers.

If not treated, lymphatic filariasis causes elephantiasis, in which there is a permanent, often extreme, enlargement of the limbs and hardening of the skin. The disease ruins the quality of life of patients, impacting them physically, emotionally, and economically.

OUR STRATEGY

The Carter Center fights lymphatic filariasis in four countries—Nigeria, Ethiopia, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic—helping to protect millions. The Center assists with distribution of the drugs Mectizan®, albendazole, and DEC (donated by Merck & Co., Inc., GSK, and Eisai, respectively). These medicines are taken in combination, depending on location, to stop transmission of the parasite from infected to uninfected people.

The Center facilitates support groups to provide mental health care for patients of this stigmatizing disease. In addition, The Carter Center supports hydrocele surgeries in Nigeria’s Plateau and Nasarawa states.

The Center periodically supports the distribution of long-lasting insecticidal bed nets to further protect communities. These nets also protect against other mosquito-borne diseases.

The Carter Center is a leader in the elimination and eradication of neglected tropical diseases.
Globally, about 120 million people are infected with lymphatic filariasis, and nearly 900 million are at risk. The Carter Center works in Nigeria, Ethiopia, and on the island of Hispaniola, shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

**WHERE WE WORK**

- **ETHIOPIA**
  - In 2009, The Carter Center began integrating mass drug administration to prevent lymphatic filariasis with river blindness and malaria control in the Gambella region. The program later expanded to parts of other regions, providing 9.6 million treatments for lymphatic filariasis through 2020.

- **NIGERIA**
  - Through a combination of more than 36 million drug treatments between 2000 and 2012 and widespread distribution of bed nets, lymphatic filariasis was eliminated as a public health threat in Plateau and Nasarawa states in 2017.
  - With support from The Carter Center, the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health integrated its lymphatic filariasis and malaria programs. The initiative was the first of its kind in Africa.

- **HAITI**
  - Globally, about 120 million people are infected with lymphatic filariasis, and nearly 900 million are at risk. The Carter Center works in Nigeria, Ethiopia, and on the island of Hispaniola, shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

**RESULTS AND IMPACT**

- **153 million+ drug treatments** delivered in Nigeria since 2000 with assistance from The Carter Center
- **7.3 million no longer at risk in Nigeria** in areas served by The Carter Center
- **9.6 million drug treatments** delivered in Ethiopia since 2009 with assistance from The Carter Center
- **1.2 million no longer at risk in Ethiopia** in areas served by The Carter Center
- **100%** of formerly endemic districts in the Dominican Republic and
- **86%** of districts in Haiti have met criteria to stop mass drug administration for lymphatic filariasis

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In Nigeria’s southern Imo state, a community drug distributor administers preventive treatment for lymphatic filariasis.