

# CHAGAS: SILENT KILLER



Chagas disease is a **neglected tropical disease** caused by the *Trypanosoma cruzi* parasite.

It is spread mostly by insects known as Triatominae, or **kissing bugs**.

If left untreated, Chagas can cause **serious problems to the heart and digestive system**.

**1**  
The *kissing bug* (also known as *vinchuca*, *barbeiro*, *pito*, *chinche*, *chipo*) carries the parasite



**2**  
The bug hides in the walls and under the roofs of mud and straw shacks



**3**  
It bites people in their sleep and defecates close to the bite, causing them to contract the disease



**4**  
The parasitic infection can also be transmitted by:

- contaminated food
- blood transfusions and organ transplants
- mother to child transmission



**Acute phase (2 months)**  
Mild or no symptoms



**Chronic asymptomatic phase (10-30 years)**  
No symptoms



**Chronic clinical phase**

**1 in 3** infected people develop heart and digestive system problems, which may lead to **death**

**6-7M**

people affected worldwide



**12,000**

people die each year from this disease



Only

**1 OUT OF 10**



are diagnosed

**75 MILLION**

people live at risk of contracting Chagas in Latin America

Once entirely confined to Latin America, Chagas has since spread to other continents as a result of migration

## CONTROL & PREVENTION

Spray houses and surrounding areas with insecticides to eliminate the bugs



Screen blood and organ donors



Screen all pregnant women and children of infected mothers



## TREATMENT



Recommended for:

- All infants with congenital infection
- All adults during the early chronic phase
- All women of childbearing age

During the late chronic phase, additional lifelong medical treatment and surgery are usually indicated.