Chagas disease is a neglected tropical disease caused by the Trypanosoma cruzi parasite. It is spread mostly by insects known as Triatominæ, or kissing bugs. If left untreated, Chagas can cause serious problems to the heart and digestive system.

### Treatment
- **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

### 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

### 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.

### Statistics
- 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.

**Source:** World Health Organization