



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

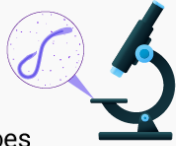
- Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis, is a [Neglected Tropical Disease \(NTD\)](#) caused by infection with filarial parasites transmitted through mosquitoes.
- In 2021, approximately **882.5 million people in 44 countries** lived in areas requiring preventive chemotherapy to halt 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.



DISEASE

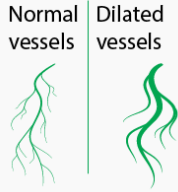
Infection

Filarial parasites spread by mosquitoes



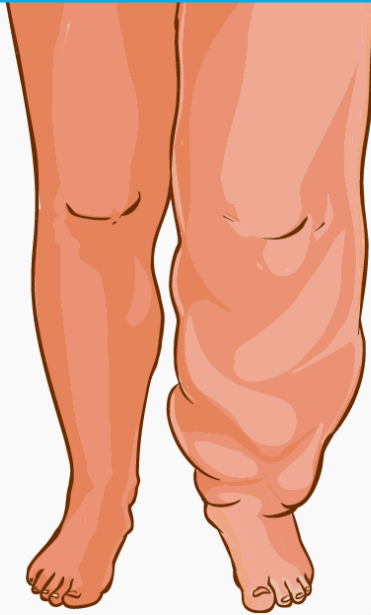
Disease

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