



MERCK

# Fighting schistosomiasis

## Key facts

### THE DISEASE

- Schistosomiasis, also known as bilharzia, is the second most devastating tropical disease in terms of public health burden and economic impact.
- The chronic parasitic disease is one of the 17 neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) prioritized by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Nearly 260 million people worldwide suffer from schistosomiasis, with more than 90% of those affected living in sub-Saharan Africa.
- It is estimated that more than 280,000 people in Africa die each year as a result of this chronic parasitic condition.
- Schistosomiasis is caused by flatworms and is spread through stagnant water.
- The infection rate is especially high among children, and the chronic symptoms that result, such as learning disabilities and anemia, are particularly serious.

### OUR COMMITMENT

- Since 2007, Merck has been partnering with WHO in the fight against schistosomiasis in Africa.
- To date, we have donated 500 million praziquantel tablets to WHO, and more than 100 million patients have been treated, primarily schoolaged children.
- Praziquantel is the only active ingredient with which all forms of schistosomiasis can be treated. It is included in the WHO List of Essential Medicines.
- Merck will increase its annual donation of praziquantel tablets to up to 250 million annually.
- Within the scope of a public-private partnership, Merck is working to develop a pediatric formulation of praziquantel.
- Merck supports an awareness program at schools in Africa that uses comic booklets and posters to explain the causes of schistosomiasis, teaching pupils how to prevent the disease.

- At the end of 2014, Merck called for various NTD constituencies to form the Global Schistosomiasis Alliance in order to help eliminate this disease worldwide.



To date, we have donated praziquantel tablets to **35** African countries.



Read more about our engagement:  
[merckgroup.com/praziquantel](http://merckgroup.com/praziquantel)

