

# *World* **CHAGAS DISEASE DAY**

**April 14, 2024**

It is estimated that more than 300,000 people are living with Chagas (CHAH-gus) disease in the United States (U.S.).





# WHAT IS CHAGAS DISEASE?

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Chagas is a life-threatening disease caused by a parasite.

This parasite is spread to people and animals through the poop of insects called triatomine bugs, also known as “kissing bugs.”

The bug and parasite that cause this disease are only found in the U.S., Mexico, Central and South America.

# WHAT ARE KISSING BUGS?

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Kissing bugs are insects that can carry the parasite that causes Chagas disease.

These bugs tend to have a painless bite and take blood meals from people and animals at night.

They have long, cone-shaped heads with a thin needle like mouth. They have thin legs and are usually flat, dark brown or black with a red-orange or light brown edge.




# WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

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Chagas has two phases including Acute and Chronic. Both phases can be symptom free and life-threatening.

Acute phase (occurs right after infection, most cases are symptom free):

- Body aches,
- Fever,
- Rash,
- Swollen eyelid,
- Vomiting, and
- Diarrhea.



# WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

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If left untreated, this disease is lifelong and will progress into the chronic phase.

Chronic phase:

- Can be symptom free and may last years or decades.
- 20–30% of cases will become symptomatic and can develop severe heart and stomach complications.



# CHAGAS IN ANIMALS

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Animals can also be affected by the parasite that causes Chagas disease in people by:

- Eating the triatomine bug,
- Being exposed to the poop of the bug, or
- Eating the meat of an infected animal.

Chagas can affect a range of mammals, including dogs, although less is known about how it affects many non-domestic mammals.