The kissing bug may sound romantic, but the heart-damaging insect packs a kiss deadlier than you could imagine.

The silent assassins earned their name from the fact that they bite around the lips and faces of people as they sleep. But these "kisses" can turn deadly.
After piercing the skin, the bug defecates in the wound with fecal matter that hosts a parasite called *Trypanosoma cruzi*. This eventually enters the bloodstream and causes trypanosomiasis, also dubbed Chagas disease and kissing bug disease.

The disease was generally considered by many to be mild -- even asymptomatic in some cases. But according to a new study published Thursday in the *journal PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, the infection has claimed much more deaths than once believed, many of which are reportedly going unrecognized.

"In every age category, people who had Chagas died more than people who didn't have Chagas," Ligia Capuani, an infectious disease researcher at Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de Sao Paulo, in Brazil, told CNN.
But according to the Capuani, 40 percent of people who's bloodwork came back as positive for the disease did not have the infection listed on their death certificate.

"What the parasite does to the body takes a long time; (it) slowly goes into the heart and destroys it," Sabino said. "We have measured accurately the risk of death, (as) a lot of mortality data doesn't account for Chagas."

"Most people who get infected carry on with their lives ... unaware they were bitten," Sabino continued. "A lot of mortality data doesn't account for Chagas, so you underestimate the effect of the disease."

At present, there is no vaccine available for the disease. The best way to prevent infection is to protect yourself against that bugs spreading the parasite by applying insecticides and
tending to open places in homes, as the insects are often found inside the walls or cracks in the roof in poorly constructed residences.

Chagas Disease: Natural Herbal Remedies For “New AIDS”

Chagas Disease (Chagas’ disease, American trypanosomiasis, “The New AIDS of the Americas”) is a tropical parasitic disease that is common in South and Central America, and now the disease is a growing problem in North America and Europe. According to the report “Medical Encyclopedia: Chagas disease” published in 2008 by National Institutes of Health, approximately 300,000 infected people live in the United States, which is likely due to immigration from Latin American countries.

What is Chagas Disease
Chagas Disease was named after the Brazilian doctor Carlos Chagas, who first described the disease in 1909. This infection is caused by a protozoan parasite named Trypanosoma cruzi, which...
is commonly transmitted to humans by an insect vector “kissing bug” of the subfamily Triatominae. The bug bites and sucks the blood of its sleeping victim, and defecates on the person. Triatomines pass T. cruzi parasites (called trypomastigotes) in the body. Once inside the body, the trypomastigotes invade cells, and gradually destroys heart tissue and the gastrointestinal tract. It typically causes chronic symptoms such as cardiac arrhythmias, poor gastrointestinal motility, etc.

Chagas disease has two stages: acute and chronic. In the early, acute stage, the patient may have no symptoms or have very mild symptoms, typically, swelling and reddening at the site of infection. After 1-2 months, the patient with active infections enters the chronic stage. In chronic stage, the disease affects the nervous system, digestive system and heart. In the chronic stage, about 2/3 of people have cardiac damage, including dilated cardiomyopathy, which causes heart rhythm abnormalities and may result in sudden death. About 1/3 of people likely develop digestive system disorders, such as megacolon, megaesophagus, severe weight loss, swallowing difficulties, and malnutrition.

Modern Treatment of Chagas Disease
According to the WHO, there are two antiparasitic drugs benznidazole and nifurtimox that are effective to treat Chagas disease. If the two drugs are used in the early, acute stage, the cure rates can be up to 90%. But both drugs often have side effects, which may include: headaches, dizziness, loss of appetite, etc.

Herbal Remedies for Chagas Disease
Native Americans used herbs to treat symptoms of Chagas disease for centuries. The Kallawayas of Midwestern Bolivia were using guayusa, and sayre with an enema syringe to purge patients as early as A.D. 400. Even today, they still use wild tobacco as an effective vermifuge and parasiticide remedy. Sniffing tobacco and guayusa helps cleanse the passageways by causing sneezing, and the nicotine in tobacco also stimulates the cardiovascular system when it enters the bloodstream. The remedies can relieve some of the effects of chronic Chagas disease.
Nicolas Carrasco, a Bolivian herbal doctor, used a herbal remedy called “Regenerator” to cure Chagas disease. The remedy contains a resin from the fruit of the Rotan palm tree (Calamus drago), called Sangre de Drago (Blood of the Dragon). The plant’s seeds are toasted, crushed, added to a small glass of pisco liquor, and drunk daily. The remedy purges the body of toxic fluids, warms body and expels cold-dampness in blood. The fresh seeds contain acetic acid, butyric acid, glyceride, and castor oil, which form a powerful purgative. This remedy is used against the constipation sometimes caused by the infestation of T. cruzi parasites in the intestine.

Jaime Zalles, a contemporaneous Bolivian herbalist, treats chagasic heart disease with three flowers of retama in a mate (steeped in hot water), with two leaves of cedron (Lippia triphylla). The remedy is used as a tranquilliser for heart attacks. Toronjil Melissa officinalis L. is also used for heart problems associated with Chagas disease.

**Homeopathic remedies**

**Ledum** is a widely known treatment for the stings of venomous insects. It neutralizes venom and speeds recovery from poisoning. It's appropriate for any insect bite, especially those that produce severe itching and coldness at the site of the bite. The skin may be bluish or purple, feel cold to the touch and look bruised. Take a dose of Ledum as soon as you realize you've been stung. There may be arthritic joint aches and pains accompanying the early stages after being bitten.

**Apis** is a useful remedy for insect bites that produce red, hot, swollen welts that itch mercilessly and sting or burn. The swollen area appears filled with fluid and itching is relieved by cold applications.

**Tarentula Cubensis** is called for in cases where sepsis sets in after being bitten by a venomous insect. There may be red or purple boils oozing with pus. Tremendous burning pains are present throughout the body with systemic swelling of various organs. Patients may have the peculiar symptom restless legs during attacks. Chills, fever, gangrenous flesh are present.

**Anthracinum** is useful in cases where the site of the bite becomes septic and infected. Terrible burning pains at the site of the bite, where tissues are swollen and ulcerated. The infection moves rapidly through the skin into underlying tissue.

**Urtica Urens** is used in cases where there are large, red, swollen hives and terrible itching. It's often associated with allergic reactions, which can be produced by stinging insects. Rheumatic pains may be present in the joints as well as nerve pains throughout the body after being bitten by a kissing bug.
Herbal remedies

The following substances are known for possessing potent anti-parasitic agents and can be consumed in teas or used topically. Start treatment immediately upon discovery of being bitten in an attempt to prevent the spread of the parasites that cause Chagas.

· Green coconut juice mixed with olive oil
· Pau d'Arco tea
· Colloidal silver
· Garlic tea
· Grapefruit seed extract
· Oil of Oregano
· Turmeric
· Black walnut extract

Certain homeopathic remedies are only available through homeopathic practitioners. If you live in an area where you may be susceptible to being bitten, stock up on herbs and homeopathic remedies ahead of time.

Warnings

Please note, Chagas disease is a severe disease. If you are affected by the disease, you should seek medical care immediately, visiting your doctor, and taking a treatment without a delay. Although the natural herbal remedies might help improve the symptoms of chronic Chagas disease, but the cures have not been validated by modern medicine studies.

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