

World's first malaria vaccine launched

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WHO welcomes the Government of Malawi's launch of the world's first malaria vaccine in a landmark pilot programme. The country is the first of three in Africa in which the vaccine, known as RTS,S, will be made available to children up to 2 years of age; Ghana and Kenya will introduce the vaccine in the coming weeks.

Thirty years in the making, RTS,S is the first, and to date the only, vaccine that has demonstrated it can significantly reduce malaria in children. In clinical trials, the vaccine was found to prevent approximately 4 in 10 malaria cases, including 3 in 10 cases of life-threatening severe malaria.

The vaccine is a complementary malaria control tool – to be added to the core package of WHO-recommended measures for malaria prevention, including the routine use of insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor spraying with insecticides, and the timely use of malaria testing and treatment.

The WHO-coordinated pilot programme is a collaborative effort with ministries of health in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi and a range of in-country and international partners, including PATH, a non-profit organization, and GSK, the vaccine developer and manufacturer, which is donating up to 10 million vaccine doses for this pilot.