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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
5884	27.04.2020	28.04.2020	Bhubaneswar Odisha	www.newindianexpress.com/English https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bhubaneswar/2020/apr/27/covid-lockdown-raises-malaria-fear-2135861.html
Title:	Covid lockdown raises malaria fear			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-Bhubaneswar, SSU-Odisha			

The month-long lockdown has affected the pre-monsoon activities that are usually carried out to check malaria in the high burden districts and inaccessible pockets. The distribution of Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs) and interventions like Durgama Anchalare Malaria Nirakaran (DAMaN), a malaria control programme has taken a backseat giving rise to fear of cases shooting up in the State. Odisha had, in fact, recorded highest 80 per cent decline in malaria cases in 2018 drawing appreciation from the WHO.

The mosquito-borne diseases have already started showing its trend during the early months of the year. As per the National Vector-Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP) statistics, Odisha has recorded 5,549 malaria positive cases, the second highest in the country after Chhattisgarh (7,908) in January, February and March. Though no death has been reported, the number of Plasmodium falciparum, the deadly parasite, cases contribute to over 90 per cent (5,169) of the total positive cases.

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

22-Sham Nath Marg, Delhi – 110 054

For more information please contact: Media Scanning & Verification Cell: - Phone (011)23946029

Email: - idspsc@nic.in, idsppo@nic.in

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After decline in cases, the State Government had approached the Centre to send 1.13 crore LLINs to be distributed in the high burden districts in 2018 but those are yet to reach. The nets contributed majorly for the decline in malaria cases. "Of the stock of around 26.54 lakh nets, 80 per cent were distributed before the lockdown was imposed. The rest will be distributed after the restrictions are lifted," said a health official.

With the Government intensifying screening of population across the State, it has planned to use the opportunity to screen people for both, coronavirus and malaria. The ANMs, ASHA and anganwadi workers engaged in house-to-house survey to ascertain the status of people who returned from other States and check their health condition have also been asked to screen them for malaria or dengue symptoms.

"In case people are having fever without any flu like symptoms, we have asked the health workers to guide them for test of malaria or dengue. Along with Covid, we have already started malaria awareness activities that were hampered since mid March," the official said.

Although for the first time 21 districts have recorded annual parasite incidence (API) of less than one, the rest nine districts, including Rayagada, Malkangiri, Koraput, Kandhamal, Kalahandi and Sundargarh still have high API level.

Odisha Lead of 'Malaria No More' Biswajit Mohapatra said the surveillance activities will be further accelerated once the lockdown restrictions are withdrawn. Odisha has inked a pact with the US-based non profit to eliminate malaria. "Although the pre-monsoon activities are carried out in April and May, I think the golden period is not lost. A well-trained dedicated frontline workforce is on the job. Since the southern and western belts still have high incidences, the State needs to do sub-centre level planning and intensify screening and monitoring in these areas," he suggested.

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