

What can you do?

In the developing world, many interventions can make a difference. Arguably, none could be stated to have the same impact at such low cost achieved by iodine. Without iodine, miscarriage rates spike, IQ decreases of 10 to 15 points and worst of all children are born with mental retardation. Specifically, in Haiti an estimated 29,000 children are born each year with this preventable but irreversible mental retardation.

Aid for Haiti has developed an iodine treatment program focused on treating women of childbearing age and children to prevent and treat the worst effects of this disease. For a small amount we can make a huge difference. Please consider partnering with us in this program. Contact us for more information.



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Iodine Program



Tearing Off The Darkness



"I just hope that when it's all over for us, that in some way we made the light a bit brighter. Maybe just tear off a corner of the darkness." - Bono

The opportunity to do the extraordinary and leave a lasting impact upon this world rarely presents itself. For the poor and destitute in Haiti, what we take for granted every day in iodized salt offers this remarkable opportunity. In a land of darkness and suffering, one single pill can be the difference between a life spent with crippling mental retardation and one of opportunity.

Iodine deficiency has been described as a "hidden hunger." It creates no outward symptoms until it is far too late. In addition to being the world's most common cause of reversible mental retardation, this disease causes miscarriage, infertility, goiter, growth stunting and mental dullness throughout life. Unfortunately, children suffer the most severe consequences of this disease. In Haiti, each year 29,000 children are born with severe mental retardation due to a lack of iodine. Each one of these cases could be easily prevented by one small pill.

Recently, a previously unknown region within the rugged southern mountains of Haiti was discovered suffering from this disease. The people there suffer from goiter, a large, tumor-like growth on the front on the neck caused by a lack of iodine. Without any access to healthcare, one middle aged woman states plainly, "I've had this since I was a very small girl, and until now I have never had any reason to hope [for treatment]."

An opportunity to tear off a piece of the darkness now presents itself. What we do next will be the deciding factor between a life of basic human opportunity and one of disease and crippling disability for children of an entire region of Haiti. A mother perfectly sums up the situation, stating, "My family has suffered from this for years and all I want is for my daughter to be free of this [disease]."

The Face of Opportunity



This is the true face of iodine deficiency. Within Haiti 29,000 newborns with mental retardation are born each year, millions of children grow up without the opportunity to fully meet their potential, and men and women go through life with major physical deformity. The tragedy of the situation is that all of this is easily preventable.

For the mothers and fathers in the mountains of Haiti opportunity comes at a price. Each day consists of back breaking work in the fields from dawn to dusk in hope of providing a better life for their own children. With no opportunity nearby the only hope is a costly education to free the next generation from the same life. Unknown to the community, this opportunity is being stolen away by the effects of iodine deficiency.

Each child you see here was part of a pilot project to treat this disease. With one small capsule of iodized oil each child is freed to pursue education with a 15 point IQ increase. When given to young women this treatment becomes the most cost effective way of preventing mental retardation in the world. It is estimated, using iodine supplementation, the cost is only \$1000 to prevent the death of one child. In a nation where 20% of children born will die before their fifth birthday, the importance cannot be overstated.

Using a proven program, treatment is focused upon school children and young women. This allows for maximum benefit at lowest cost. The cost is only \$20 to treat one mother or child in this remote region. It is

estimated that for every one dollar spent on iodine there is a gain in productivity of \$28. In addition to preventing the effects of a terrible disease, each dollar spent greatly aids in the welfare of each person in this impoverished nation. The world bank adds "Probably no other technology offers as large an opportunity to improve lives at such low cost and in such a short time."

While the opportunity is great the possibilities are few. Without this program these mothers and children will suffer from this disease. No other foreign or national aid reaches this region. As communicated by the mothers of this region, without you, "Where else could we go?"