

## 300,000 people in the US live with heart- and gut-destroying Chagas 'kissing bug' disease

While many people may never have heard of Chagas in the U.S., about 8 million people in Mexico, Central America and South America have it, according to the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), and it kills more than 10,000 people a year.

And in the U.S., over 300,000 people are living with [Chagas' disease](#), according to the CDC, mostly U.S. Hispanics who have moved from Latin America.

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[Researcher Norman Beatty] explained that the insect, the kissing bug, harbors a parasite in its midgut and the fecal matter of the bugs is infectious, spreading to humans through interaction," Beatty said.

Transmission from a human to others can occur from blood transfusions, organ donations and mother to baby during pregnancy.

Most people who acquire the parasite during the acute phase are asymptomatic, or do not have any symptoms whatsoever.

"If they do have symptoms," Beatty said, "they're often very mild flu-like symptoms like a fever, fatigue, enlarged lymph nodes, and this process will self-resolve. But the parasite is still persisting in the body."

Approximately 20 to 30 percent of infected people develop cardiac or gastrointestinal complications.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.\*\*](#)