

WHO Position Statement on Effectiveness of Non-tablet Forms of *Artemisia annua* L against Malaria

Since the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended the use of artemisinin-based combination therapies for malaria in 2001, a number of other forms of *Artemisia annua* L for use as anti-malaria "remedies" have appeared, including tea bags made from the plant's leaves. WHO does not recommend the oral use of any form of artemisinin other than capsules and tablets.

The recommended strength of artemisinin is 250mg capsules or tablets according to the International Pharmacopeia, published by WHO. Artemisinin content in raw materials is quite low, approaching 1% even in high-yield raw materials. For this reason it is virtually impossible for a tea bag to contain the amount of substance required to cure malaria.

Due to the instability of artemisinin in raw materials of *Artemisia annua* L, the leaves need to be stored in cool conditions — preferably below 20°C. Most malaria endemic countries have warm climates and people generally lack access to refrigeration, so it is difficult for patients to keep artemisinin-containing tea bags under 20°C in their homes.

Artemisinin contained in raw materials of *Artemisia annua* L is unstable when heated. Boiling water to make tea may cause it to lose any anti-malarial properties it may have.