

# PREVENT, PROTECT, AND TREAT: HOW USAID WORKS TO FIGHT CHILDHOOD PNEUMONIA GLOBALLY



## USAID'S APPROACH TO THE GLOBAL BURDEN

As the leading infectious killer of children under five years old, pneumonia causes an estimated 800,000 deaths each year, with the majority in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Yet most pneumonia-related deaths are preventable through high-impact interventions and practices.

USAID's maternal and child survival work is focused in 25 countries that account for more than two-thirds of the world's child and maternal deaths. To tackle the threat of child pneumonia in these countries, USAID takes a three-pronged approach: PREVENT, PROTECT, AND TREAT.

## PREVENT IMMUNIZATION

Immunization is among the most impactful and cost-effective public health interventions, reducing disease prevalence and the cost of subsequent treatment. However, more than 19 million infants worldwide do not receive routine immunizations each year, increasing their risk of pneumonia and other life-threatening, preventable diseases.

Pneumonia vaccines not only prevent child deaths but can also reduce antibiotic use and help stem the spread of deadly, antimicrobial-resistant bacteria. That's why USAID partners with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and others to expand access to life-saving vaccines in 73 low-income countries. Through contributions to Gavi and support for national immunization programs, USAID has helped immunize **more than 180 million children** against pneumonia since 2007.

## AIR QUALITY

Globally, half of pneumonia deaths can be attributed to household air pollution, which increases the risk and severity of the illness through lung damage and inflammation. In Africa alone, approximately 350 million children live in homes that use polluting solid fuels for cooking and heating. To combat this, USAID promotes clean household air practices and supports research on the health impacts of air pollution and the benefits of reduced exposure. For instance, in Ghana, USAID, with the Clean Cooking Alliance, supported research on the health impacts of clean cooking and trained health practitioners on the link between air pollution and pneumonia, contributing to the city of Accra's ban on open burning in 2018.

## HANDWASHING

Handwashing with soap can reduce the risk of respiratory infections by up to 23 percent. Yet across USAID's 25 maternal and child survival focus countries, households with a designated handwashing station range from less than one percent in Ethiopia to 48 percent in Nepal. USAID works with governments, schools, and communities to promote regular handwashing with soap and to increase the number of handwashing stations at key locations, such as by latrines or where food is prepared. For example, in just two years, USAID increased the number of households with soap and water at handwashing stations from **48 percent to 61 percent** across supported communities in Nepal.

28M+ CHILDREN REACHED  
BY USAID WITH NUTRITION  
PROGRAMS IN 2018,  
CONTRIBUTING TO FEWER  
DEATHS FROM PNEUMONIA.

## PROTECT

### MANAGEMENT OF ACUTE MALNUTRITION

Malnutrition is an underlying cause of an estimated 45 percent of child deaths globally, inhibiting immune systems and increasing the risk of infections and illnesses like pneumonia. USAID works to prevent and treat acute malnutrition by partnering with host country governments, frontline workers, and international and local organizations to strengthen child nutrition services and increase country capacity and commitment to improve nutrition. In coordination with the Government of Mozambique, USAID improved referral systems between rural health facilities and communities across three provinces, which increased the recovery rate from acute malnutrition from **59 percent to 72 percent** in just one year.

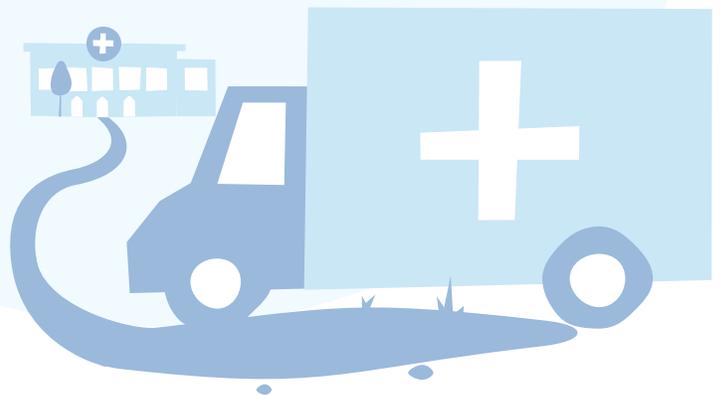
## EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING

Exclusive breastfeeding for an infant's first six months of life is the most effective way to protect them against life-threatening infectious diseases like pneumonia. Infants exclusively breastfed are 15 times less likely to die from pneumonia than those who are not. USAID builds support systems for breastfeeding mothers and implements training programs for health care workers to educate pregnant women on proper breastfeeding techniques. Through these efforts, for example, USAID has increased the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in supported communities in Nepal from **46 percent to 69 percent** in seven years.

## TREAT

### IMPROVED COMMUNITY- AND FACILITY-BASED TREATMENT

Lack of access to adequate and timely care contributes to pneumonia's prevalence. Worldwide, less than 60 percent of children under five with pneumonia symptoms are taken to an appropriate health provider. That's why USAID supports countries in implementing Integrated Community Case Management (iCCM), which expands pneumonia care to populations with limited access to facility-based health care providers. Additionally, USAID seeks to improve facility care through Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) to properly assess and treat children with pneumonia-related symptoms and to educate parents on preventative measures. Since 2012, USAID has provided **85.2 million treatments** to children for pneumonia and diarrhea.



To learn more about how USAID works to fight childhood pneumonia globally, visit <https://www.usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/maternal-and-child-health>.