

VALUE OF VACCINES

FACT SHEET

Vaccines save lives and give children a healthy start; they are the best investment in health. For just a few dollars per child, vaccines can prevent disability and disease for a lifetime—saving millions of dollars in potential healthcare spending.

The protective effects are immediate, yet the health, educational, social, and economic impacts are long-term. With healthy children, families can be more productive. This creates a ripple effect that leads to more prosperous, self-sufficient communities. In turn those communities boost whole economies.

Today, we have vaccines to protect children against seven preventable diseases, and with advances in research, we can discover vaccines for other deadly diseases. We must also improve vaccine delivery so that vaccines reach the children who need them, especially those in developing countries. Better vaccine coverage could save more than eight million lives over the next decade.

VACCINES: A GLOBAL HEALTH PRIORITY

Vaccines play a critical role in reducing child deaths, and millions of children are thriving thanks to immunization. Yet more than two million children under the age of five still die each year from preventable diseases because they don't get the immunizations they need. Millions more are left severely and permanently disabled.

Vaccines were among our earliest and largest investments. The realization that children in wealthy countries have access to vaccines while children in the developing world are dying from preventable diseases is what first motivated Bill and Melinda Gates to invest in global health. Because of their value and potential to save lives, we have made vaccines a strategic priority for our research and development work, and our delivery team strives to significantly increase the number of children who are immunized.



A child receiving oral polio vaccine from a house-to-house vaccination team (Kano, Nigeria, Africa, 2010).

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS

We are inspired by the legacy of incredible success and progress that has been made in the last decade, and are confident that even greater gains are possible. Millions of children's lives have been saved—at least 20 million over the past two decades—and new vaccines are in development. Some examples of progress include:

- **Polio:** We are 99 percent of the way toward eradicating polio worldwide and could make it the second disease ever to be wiped out.
- **Diarrhea:** A safe and effective rotavirus vaccine can prevent children from dying from severe diarrhea—four years after the vaccine was introduced in Nicaragua, cases dropped by 60 percent.
- **Pneumonia:** A new pneumococcal vaccine launched in 2011 could, with widespread adoption, save the lives of up to 400,000 children each year.
- **Meningitis:** A new meningitis A vaccine recently launched in sub-Saharan Africa can be manufactured and delivered for only \$1 (U.S.).



Kelin Munoz having her young baby vaccinated at the local rural health clinic (Corozal, Nicaragua, 2009).

Partners Making an Impact

- PATH's Malaria Vaccine Initiative is working to develop next-generation vaccines that protect against malaria.
- The Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation is partnering with academics and pharmaceutical companies to advance several tuberculosis vaccine candidates through clinical trials.
- The Collaboration for AIDS Vaccine Discovery (CAVD) is an international network of more than 500 scientists and experts designing preventive vaccines against HIV/AIDS.
- Since 2000, the GAVI Alliance has raised the funds to immunize more than 250 million children, and prevented 5.4 million deaths.
- Children's Hospital Boston is developing more effective vaccines to improve infant health and survival, particularly in low-income countries where infant infections are common.

- **Measles:** Measles deaths in Africa have been cut by more than 90 percent in the past decade.
- **Cholera:** A new oral vaccine for cholera, now made in India, will soon be more widely available to protect children under five for just \$1 a dose.
- **Japanese encephalitis:** A new vaccine from China for Japanese encephalitis is now available in Asia and requires only one dose to protect children for a lifetime.

As we look ahead, the foundation is committed to building on the tremendous progress made in vaccine discovery, development, and delivery to ensure that each person has the opportunity to live a healthy and productive life.

STRENGTH IN PARTNERSHIP

Although our commitment and investments are significant, providing millions of children with a healthier start to life cannot be achieved without greater support from partners across the globe. Many people worldwide, in government and public and private organizations, have worked tirelessly to develop and distribute a wide range of vaccines in previous decades.

Inspired by the legacy of incredible success and progress that has been made in the last decade, we are confident that even greater gains are possible within a framework of coordinated action. At the 2010 World Economic Forum, Bill and Melinda called for the next ten years to be the Decade of Vaccines, a major effort to discover, develop, and deliver new and existing vaccines. We are working with the global community to make this happen.

With increased support and participation from around the world, we can get the right vaccines to the millions of children who need them. Together, we can ensure that all children have a shot at a healthy life.

TO LEARN MORE

About the Global Health Program:
www.gatesfoundation.org/global-health

About our work on vaccines:
www.gatesfoundation.org/vaccines

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

For additional information on the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, please visit our website: www.gatesfoundation.org.

© 2011 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. All Rights Reserved. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is a registered trademark in the United States and other countries.