

Theme: #Vaccines Work

World Immunization Week – celebrated in the last week of April – aims to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease. Immunization saves millions of lives and is widely recognized as one of the world’s most successful and cost-effective health interventions. Today, there are still 19.4 million unvaccinated and under-vaccinated children in the world.

Five years into the Decade of Vaccines

2017 marks the halfway point in the Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP) – endorsed by 194 Member States of the World Health Assembly in May 2012 – which aims to prevent millions of deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases by 2020 through universal access to immunization.

Despite improvements in individual countries and a strong global rate of new vaccine introduction, all of the targets for disease elimination—including measles, rubella, and maternal and neonatal tetanus—are behind schedule. In order for everyone, everywhere to survive and thrive, countries must make more concerted efforts to reach GVAP goals by 2020. Additionally, those countries that have achieved or made forward progress towards achieving the goals must work to sustain those efforts over time.

2017 Campaign objectives



The main goal of the campaign is to raise awareness about the critical importance of full immunization throughout life, and its role in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

As part of the 2017 campaign, WHO and partners aim to:

- Highlight the importance of immunization as a top global health investment priority.
- Promote understanding of the action steps required to achieve the Global Vaccine Action Plan.
- Showcase immunization’s role in sustainable development and global health security.

Why immunization matters now more than ever

Expanding access to immunization is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Routine immunization is a building block of strong primary health care and universal health coverage—it provides a point of contact for health care at the beginning of life and offers every child the chance at a healthy life from the start.

Immunization is also a fundamental strategy in achieving other health priorities, from controlling viral hepatitis, to curbing antimicrobial resistance, to providing a platform for adolescent health and improving antenatal and newborn care