



for every child

CHILDREN, HIV AND AIDS

Every day, about 300 children and adolescents die from AIDS-related causes.

Globally, 2.8 million children and adolescents are living with HIV. **Almost 70 percent of new HIV infections among children in 2021 were due to the mother not receiving antiretroviral treatment (ART).**

Over the last two decades, there has been a massive reduction in AIDS-related mortality among children. **More than 1.24 million cumulative deaths have been averted by access to HIV programs and services.**

Globally, the number of AIDS-related deaths among children aged 0–19 has fallen by more than one half (54 percent) since 2000 because of expanded treatment services. Children living with HIV are now more likely to survive into adolescence or adulthood. But while the number of deaths has declined, globally, children under age 15 account for about 5 percent of all people living with HIV, 10 percent of new HIV infections and 15 percent of all AIDS-related deaths. **In 2020, the number of new infections in children was 150,000.**

Numerous factors are hindering global progress in preventing new HIV infections and saving more lives. Many infants, children and adolescents living with HIV have not been tested, and thus they remain undiagnosed and untreated. Even if children are started on ART, drug options are limited, and their treatment outcomes are generally poorer compared with adults.

2021 HIV/AIDS SNAPSHOT

- **39 COUNTRIES** supported gender-responsive HIV prevention interventions for adolescents
- **81 PERCENT OF PREGNANT WOMEN** living with HIV globally were receiving effective antiretroviral medicines for prevention of mother-to-child transmission
- **66 PERCENT OF THE ESTIMATED INFANTS** exposed to HIV were tested for HIV within two months of birth globally

Some progress in ART access for children has been made since 2010, when coverage in children aged 0–14 years was just 18 percent. However, the rate of progress has slowed in recent years: ART coverage for children in 2020 was 54 percent, almost the same as in 2018 (54 percent) and an increase of just 12 percent from 2015. Treatment for children living with HIV therefore lags significantly behind pregnant women (85 percent coverage in 2019) and adults in general (67 percent), and as a consequence, the

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number of children at risk of dying from AIDS remains high. **In 2020, only 54% of children with HIV had access to life-saving treatment.**

UNICEF HIV PROGRAMS

UNICEF'S HIV work is cross-cutting and takes a life-cycle approach. In 2021, UNICEF supported the promotion of differentiated programming for children, adolescents, and pregnant women; partnerships and coordination for results; and intergration of HIV with other health services.

Despite COVID-19-related service disruptions and other challenges, in 2021, UNICEF continued to provide support in these areas for the 35 priority countries that comprise the largest burden of unmet need. In addition to supporting smarter programming at the country level, in 2021, UNICEF supported multi-month dispensing of ART, which was rolled out and expanded in many countries in response to emergency curfews and severe capacity constraints at health-care facilities. In Somalia ARVs began to be provided

on a quarterly basis to limit exposure to COVID-19 and continues to be supported as the standard of care

Since 2012, UNICEF has supported the introduction of point-of-care (POC) diagnostics to overcome bottlenecks in early infant diagnosis (EID) in several countries in Africa. Although increasing timely testing among infants was the first objective for POC roll out, results from several countries in 2021 showcase how the introduction of POC technology with UNICEF support has also helped to strengthen health and laboratory systems. In Kaduna, Nigeria the addition of the POC devices reduced turnaround time for EID from 4 weeks to 50 minutes.

In 2021, UNICEF prioritized support for interventions aimed to reach and support adolescent girls who are among the most vulnerable to HIV. In Eswatini, UNICEF supported 13 health-care facilities provide sexual and reproductive health rights and HIV preventon services and trained 88 health staff on new adolescent sexual and reproductive guidelines. Through this effort, 357 adolescent girls were reached with information on HIV prevention.



A community mediator raises awareness of HIV among women at the Mother and Child Centre in Diffa, in the extreme southeast of Niger.

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