



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: WHY IT MATTERS

What's the goal here?

To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Why?

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages is important to building prosperous societies.

However, despite great strides in improving people's health and well-being in recent years,

inequalities in health care access still persist. More than six million children still die before their fifth birthday each year, and only half of all women in developing regions have access to the health care they need.

Epidemics like HIV/AIDS thrive where fear and discrimination limit people's ability to receive the services they need to live healthy and productive lives.

Spending
\$1 billion in
immunization
coverage
can save
1 million
children's lives
each year.

Access to good health and well-being is a human right, and that is why the Sustainable Development Agenda offers a new chance to ensure that everyone can access the highest standards of health and health care—not just the wealthiest.

What progress have we made so far?

Major progress has been made in several areas, including in child and maternal health as well as in addressing HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Maternal mortality has fallen by almost 50 per cent since 1990; measles vaccines have averted nearly 15.6 million deaths since 2000; and 13.6 million people had access to antiretroviral therapy by the end of 2014..

We may have come a long way, but we still have a longer way to go. Real progress means achieving universal health coverage; making essential medicines and vaccines affordable; ensuring that women have full access to sexual and reproductive health care; and ending all preventable deaths of children.

How much will it cost to achieve these targets?

Ensuring healthy lives for all requires a strong commitment, but the benefits outweigh the cost. Healthy people are the foundation for healthy economies.

For example, if we spent \$1 billion in expanding immunization coverage against influenza, pneumonia and other preventable diseases, we could save 1 million children's lives each year. In the past decade, improvements in health and health care led to a 24 per cent increase in income growth in some of the poorest countries.

The cost of inaction is greater—millions of children will continue to die from preventable diseases, women will die in pregnancy and childbirth, and health care costs will continue to plunge millions of people into poverty. Noncommunicable diseases alone will cost low- and middle-income countries more than \$7 trillion in the next 15 years.

What can I do to help?

You can start by promoting and protecting your own health and the health of those around you, by making well-informed choices, practicing safe sex and vaccinating your children.

You can raise awareness in your community about the importance of good health, healthy lifestyles as well as people's right to quality health care services.

Take action through schools, clubs, teams and organizations to promote better health for all, especially for the most vulnerable such as women and children.

You can also hold your government, local leaders and other decision-makers accountable to their commitments to improve people's access to health and health care.

To find out more about Goal #3 and the other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>