

# GLOBAL HEALTH Healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy

## THE FACTS

- Access to family planning for all women of reproductive age who wish to use it could:
  - prevent almost 30% of all maternal deaths
  - save the lives of 70,000 women from unsafe abortion each year.
- Infant and child deaths can be reduced by more than 50% if children are born 3-5 years apart.
- In developing countries the risk of prematurity and low birth weight doubles when conception occurs within 6 months of a previous birth
- Children born to women younger than 18 years have an excess mortality risk of about 40% and are more likely to be stunted and anaemic than children born to women over 18 years of age



Source: *The Lancet, Family Planning 2: Contraception and health, 2012*

## WORLD VISION'S 7-11 STRATEGY

### *An integrated approach*

World Vision's evidence-based health and nutrition strategy is called the 7-11 strategy, because it includes 7 interventions for pregnant women and 11 for children under 2 years of age (see table below). World Vision is implementing 7-11 in more than 60 countries around the world. As part of this strategy, World Vision promotes and supports the integration of reproductive health for men, women and families within primary health care services, which include antenatal, delivery, postnatal, neonatal and paediatric services; basic obstetric emergency care; family planning clinics; maternal and infant nutrition; immunisation services; and HIV/prevention of mother-to-child transmission services.

World Vision's health and nutrition programmes are implemented in both long-term development and emergency contexts. Any programmes containing reproductive health elements emphasise prevention, wellness and responsible decision making. World Vision collaborates with government national health policy, the local health system, family planning service providers, faith leaders and the community to design and implement health and nutrition programmes which are inclusive of reproductive health programmes and family planning.

Targets	Pregnant Women: -9 months	Children: 0-24 months
Core interventions	1. Adequate diet 2. Iron/folate supplements 3. Tetanus toxoid immunisation 4. Malaria prevention and intermittent preventive treatment 5. Birth preparedness and healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy 6. De-worming 7. Facilitate access to maternal health service: antenatal and postnatal care, skilled birth attendance, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, HIV/TB/STI screening	1. Appropriate breastfeeding 2. Essential newborn care 3. Hand washing with soap 4. Appropriate complementary feeding (6-24 months) 5. Adequate iron 6. Vitamin A supplementation 7. Oral re-hydration therapy/Zinc 8. Prevention and care seeking for malaria 9. Full immunisation for age 10. Prevention and care seeking for acute respiratory infection 11. De-worming (+12 months)

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## WORLD VISION'S FAMILY PLANNING APPROACH

*Home visiting and counselling results in behavioural change and increases demand for family planning*

World Vision works in and with communities to raise awareness of the importance of healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy (HTSP) in improving maternal and child health and nutrition. The theory of change is that this will increase demand for family planning services, and families will change cultural beliefs, practices and behaviours to seek out modern family planning services. Our experiences to date have demonstrated that families can overcome significant barriers to reach services once they understand the impact of HTSP on the quality of their and their children's lives.

By using an approach called Timed and Targeted Counselling (ttC), World Vision trains and supports community health workers (CHWs) to deliver comprehensive health and nutrition messages to every pregnant woman and her family in each village supported by World Vision. World Vision is currently delivering ttC in more than 36 countries, which means our HTSP message and reach is large.

Community health workers perform approximately ten household visits over a two year period, starting during pregnancy until the child is age 2. During visits, CHWs deliver appropriate messages at the right time, which include specific messages about HTSP and modern family planning at least once during the pregnancy and two more times in the postnatal period. This approach provides multiple opportunities for family dialogue, and HTSP messages are reinforced at any household visit if the family wishes to discuss further. The goal is to support families to space births by at least two years from the birth of one child until the next pregnancy.

This approach aims to increase access to post-partum family planning, which protects that mother and child as well as future pregnancies and children from the negative effects of multiple close pregnancies and births. Since these messages are shared within the household, rather than in pregnancy support groups or antenatal clinics, adolescents and young women can also benefit. Although adolescents are not the target population of the ttC approach, they are engaged and exposed to HTSP messages because they are often present at household visits and listen to the household counselling. These messages include delaying of the first pregnancy until after 18 years of age.

To ensure family planning services are available to meet the increased demand created by HTSP messaging World Vision works to support local health services and other providers and advocates for the delivery of quality family planning services to the community.

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*World Vision respects the rights of parents to make their own decisions about family size and spacing without coercion. No modern family planning methods promoted by World Vision are abortive.*