



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Maternal and Child  
Survival Program**



## NEWBORN HEALTH

Despite global efforts to develop and promote high-impact interventions for newborn health, nearly three million infants die each year within the first month of life, with more than three-quarters of these deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. An additional 2.6 million babies are stillborn each year: half of these are during labor and birth, most are preventable, and nearly all occur in low- and middle-income countries. Improvements in the prevention of newborn death have lagged behind those for maternal and child health, and 45% of all under-five deaths happen during the newborn period. Yet, two-thirds of newborn deaths are preventable with simple, inexpensive interventions.

USAID's flagship Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) harnesses global and country level resources to reduce preventable newborn deaths. This includes advocacy and technical support to implement key interventions that address the major causes of newborn death — intrapartum complications, newborn infections, and complications of preterm birth. As part of an integrated package of maternal and newborn care, we focus on providing appropriate, timely, and high-quality essential newborn care on the day of birth and during the postnatal period, including:

- Newborn resuscitation to manage asphyxia;
- Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) for premature and low birth weight newborns; and
- Newborn infection prevention and management.

### KEY FACTS

- Newborn deaths contribute to 44% of deaths in children under five years of age <sup>(WHO)</sup>
- Three-quarters of all newborn deaths occur in the first week of life with nearly 50% occurring during the first 24 hours <sup>(WHO)</sup>
- Complications from preterm birth constitute the leading cause of death for children under five <sup>(WHO)</sup>

To advance these critical newborn health interventions, and in recognition of the fact that many newborn deaths can be prevented through improved care of women before and during pregnancy, we emphasize integration with maternal care while strengthening health services and the household-to-hospital continuum of care. MCSP collaborates and works with partners through global initiatives — such as Saving Newborn Lives, Survive & Thrive Global Development Alliance, UN Commission on Lifesaving Commodities, Every Newborn Action Plan, the Kangaroo Mother Care Acceleration Partnership, and others — to ensure newborn health remains on global and national agendas. Country partnerships include governments, local partners, and communities where the Program supports policy strengthening and scale-up of evidence-based newborn interventions.



**Photo:** A mother sits holding her newborn at a maternity clinic in Antananarivo, Madagascar (Kate Holt/MCSP)

These collective efforts contribute to strengthening skills and improving the quality of newborn health services through improved coverage and quality of essential newborn care, newborn resuscitation, essential care for small babies, prevention of umbilical infection through use of chlorhexidine, and appropriate management of possible severe bacterial infection.

## ABOUT MCSP

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The Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) is a global, USAID Cooperative Agreement to introduce and support high-impact health interventions with a focus on 25 high-priority countries with the ultimate goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths within a generation. The Program is focused on ensuring that all women, newborns and children most in need have equitable access to quality health care services to save lives.

MCSP supports programming in maternal, newborn and child health, immunization, family planning and reproductive health, nutrition, health systems strengthening, water/sanitation/hygiene, malaria, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and pediatric HIV care and treatment.

[www.mcsprogram.org](http://www.mcsprogram.org)

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