



HEALTHY MOTHER, HEALTHY NEWBORN

LINKING ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR MOTHER AND BABY ACROSS THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

Integrating care for mothers and newborns is critical to progress toward the Millennium Development Goals of reducing child mortality (MDG 4) and improving maternal health (MDG 5). Researchers, advocates, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and health workers must work together to develop, support, and implement effective, integrated policies and programs.

The health of a mother and that of her newborn baby are closely linked.

- The health of a mother and her newborn are intimately connected — beginning before conception, and continuing through childbirth and beyond.
- Most maternal and newborn deaths are caused by the mother's poor health before or during pregnancy, or by inadequate care in the critical hours and days during and after childbirth.
- When a woman dies in childbirth, her newborn baby is significantly less likely to survive.

Integrated strategies can save the lives of mothers and babies.

- Health care for mothers and newborns can be provided most effectively through an integrated “continuum of care” approach, which recognizes the close links between the health and well-being of women, newborns, and children.
- Adequate nutrition, immunization, family planning services, and health care — at the home and in the community, through primary-level outpatient services, and in clinical settings — are essential for safeguarding the health and survival of women and their newborns.
- Linking health care for a mother and her newborn baby (for example, by ensuring that postnatal visits address the health needs of both women and newborns) can promote greater efficiency, lower costs, reduce duplication of resources, and maximize impact on their health and survival.



Maternal and newborn deaths remain far too many in developing countries.

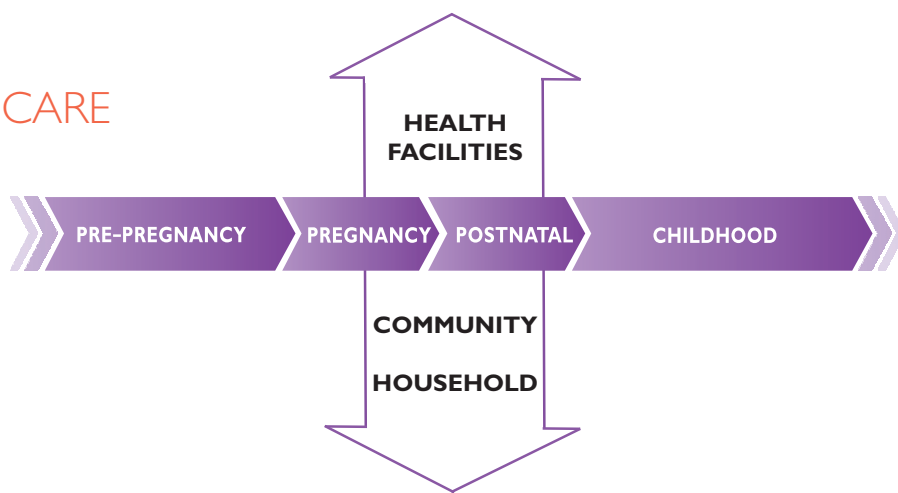
- Every day, 1,000 women die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth — nearly all from causes that are preventable or treatable.
- Each year, 3.1 million babies do not survive the first 4 weeks of life, and there are an additional 2.6 million stillbirths. Newborns account for more than 40% of all child deaths.
- Almost all (99%) of maternal and newborn deaths occur in low- and middle-income developing countries.



THE RMNCH CONTINUUM OF CARE

The “Continuum of Care” for reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) includes integrated service delivery for women and children before and during pregnancy, through delivery, the immediate postnatal period, and childhood. Such care is provided by families and communities, and through outpatient services, clinics, and other health facilities.

-The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH) Fact Sheet: RMNCH Continuum of Care, 2011



FOCUSED AND RAPID ACTION CAN DRIVE PROGRESS

Key action steps include:

- **Research:** Ensure that research studies measure the impact of interventions on both maternal and newborn health outcomes.
- **Advocacy:** Support policies that prioritize the health of women and newborns, and programs that emphasize the continuum of care.
- **Policy:** Prioritize essential services across the continuum of care — pre-pregnancy, antenatal, delivery, and postnatal — that contribute to the survival and well-being of women and their newborns (see box).
- **Programs:** Implement high-impact, cost-effective packages of care beneficial to both women and newborns.

Progress on reducing maternal and newborn deaths has been far too slow, and too many women and babies die every day. Recognizing and acting on the crucial interconnections between maternal and newborn health can save the lives and improve the health of millions of women and children.

The time for action is now!

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS HEALTH SERVICES THAT BENEFIT BOTH WOMEN AND THEIR NEWBORNS

Level of care	Lifecycle period	Health service / practice
Community/ household	Pregnancy	Iron and iron-folic acid supplementation Community support strategies (e.g., emergency transport funds, cash transfers and insurance funds, supportive care during childbirth)
	Post-natal	Exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life Recognition and treatment of postnatal depression
First-level/ outpatient	Reproductive/ Pre-pregnancy	Folic acid supplementation Family planning
	Pregnancy	Smoking cessation programs Antenatal care during pregnancy (ANC) Iron and iron-folic acid supplementation
Clinical	Pregnancy	Prevention of malaria Detection and management of high blood pressure Detection and management of maternal diabetes
	Childbirth	Prevention and management of infections (syphilis, gonorrhoea, bacterial vaginosis, chlamydia) Obstetric and newborn care to handle normal and complicated childbirth