



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Maternal and Child  
Survival Program



Photo: Jnpięgo



## NUTRITION

Maternal anemia, even moderate cases, increases the risk of dying during childbirth. Iron deficiency also contributes to poor birth outcomes and can reduce iron stores at birth, jeopardizing cognitive development and increasing the risk of child mortality. Moreover, stunting is due to inadequate infant and young child feeding and recurrent/chronic illness, and compromises adult height attainment, ability to learn, grade completion in school, productivity, and income.

USAID's flagship Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) advocates for greater attention to major and neglected barriers to optimal maternal and young child nutrition. Through different sectors and influential community members—such as men and grandmothers—MCSP works to identify new channels to increase the reach and scale-up of nutrition interventions within countries. In this way, the Program provides specialty and selective nutrition expertise to USAID and priority countries to identify barriers to improving nutrition programming and integrating cost-effective solutions.

MCSP also continues work begun under USAID's predecessor Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP) to support maternal anemia prevention and control using an integrated package of interventions to address the major causes of anemia:

### KEY FACTS

- 45% of child deaths are caused by undernutrition—including fetal growth restriction, suboptimal breastfeeding practices, stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies due to inadequate dietary intake and infections (The Lancet)
- In 2011, stunting affected about 165 million children, and being overweight affected an estimated 43 million children younger than 5 years (The Lancet)
- An estimated 20% of maternal deaths are due to maternal iron deficiency anemia and stunting in women (The Lancet)

nutritional deficiencies and parasitic infections due to malaria and soil-transmitted helminth infections. New to MCSP will be updated versions of the Knowledge for Health (K4H) Integrated Anemia Prevention and Control Toolkit with an emphasis on providing guidance and best practices on program implementation.

MCSP supports global learning on community-based distribution of iron-folic acid, identifying un-addressed breastfeeding problems leading to early introduction of food, assessing the problem of “junk food” consumption in developing countries, and improving dietary intake during pregnancy.

Taking a “learning by doing” approach, MCSP integrates lessons learned from countries where the Program is integrating nutrition, and monitors the change in the uptake of key nutrition practices to further improve program implementation.



**Photo:** A child in Kenya looks on during a food and nutrition demonstration (MCHIP)

## 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 24 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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