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**Healthy Beginnings
Hopeful Futures**



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A Healthy World

Editorial

A healthy world is one where all people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential for health and well-being. This requires a focus on both individual actions and societal factors that influence health, including access to quality healthcare, healthy environments, and equitable social and economic systems. Achieving this vision requires global cooperation and a commitment to addressing health challenges, from infectious disease outbreaks to the growing burden of non-communicable diseases.

Key Aspects of a Healthy World:

- **Universal Health Coverage:**

Ensuring everyone has access to essential health services, including prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, without facing financial hardship.

- **Healthy Environments:**

Creating safe and sustainable environments that support physical and mental well-being. This includes clean air and water, access to sanitation, and protection from environmental hazards.

- **Healthy Lifestyles:**

Promoting healthy behaviors, such as balanced diets, regular physical activity, and avoiding harmful substances like tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption.

- **Addressing Social Determinants of Health:**

Recognizing that factors like poverty, education, and access to healthy food influence health outcomes and working to address these inequalities.

- **Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies:**

Building capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases and other health emergencies.

Global Efforts and Initiatives:

- **World Health Organization (WHO):**

The WHO plays a leading role in coordinating global health efforts, setting health standards, and providing technical assistance to countries.

- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**

Goal 3 of the SDGs specifically focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages.

- **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria:**

This partnership mobilizes resources and supports programs to combat these three major infectious



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diseases.

- **Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance:**

This public-private partnership works to increase access to vaccines in the world's poorest countries.

Individual Actions for a Healthy World:

- **Adopting healthy lifestyles:** Making informed choices about diet, exercise, and substance use.

- **Supporting public health initiatives:** Participating in vaccination campaigns and other public health programs.

- **Advocating for policies that promote health:** Supporting efforts to address social determinants of health and ensure access to healthcare.

- **Promoting health in communities:** Engaging in local health initiatives and supporting community health workers.

By working together, individuals, communities, and nations can create a healthier world for all.

Primary Health Care

From the Desk of Secretary

Primary Health Care (PHC) is the foundational level of a healthcare system, providing essential, accessible, and affordable healthcare services to individuals and communities. It emphasizes health promotion, disease prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment of common ailments, forming an integral part of a country's overall social and economic development.

Key Aspects of Primary Health Care:

- **Accessibility and Affordability:**

PHC aims to make healthcare services universally accessible to everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic background, location, or other factors, through methods acceptable to them and at a cost they can afford.

- **Comprehensive Care:**

PHC encompasses a wide range of services, including health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care.

- **Community Involvement:**

PHC emphasizes the active participation of individuals, families, and communities in the planning, implementation, and decision-making processes related to their health.

- **Multisectoral Approach:**

PHC recognizes that health is influenced by various factors beyond healthcare services, such as access to clean water, sanitation, nutrition, and education, and therefore promotes a multisectoral approach to address these broader determinants of health.

- **Integration and Continuity of Care:**

PHC aims to integrate different health services and ensure a smooth continuum of care throughout an individual's life, from health promotion to palliative care.

- **Focus on Equity:**

PHC strives to reduce health disparities and ensure that everyone has equal access to quality healthcare services, paying particular attention to vulnerable and marginalized populations.



Prof. (Dr.) Sankar Sengupta

Hony. Secretary, Your Health

Importance of Primary Health Care:

- **Improved Health Outcomes:**

PHC is crucial for improving overall health outcomes, including reducing mortality rates, increasing life expectancy, and controlling the spread of diseases.

- **Cost-Effectiveness:**

By addressing health issues at the primary level, PHC can help prevent more serious and costly health problems from developing, thus making healthcare systems more cost-effective.

- **Emergency Preparedness:**

PHC plays a vital role in emergency preparedness and response by enabling early detection of diseases, facilitating timely interventions, and strengthening community resilience.

- **Sustainable Development:**

PHC is an essential component of sustainable development, contributing to social and economic progress by promoting healthy populations and empowering communities.

Examples of Primary Health Care Services:



- **Maternal and child health care:** Prenatal care, delivery services, vaccinations, and child health check-ups.
 - **Management of common illnesses:** Treatment of colds, flu, minor injuries, and other ailments.
 - **Chronic disease management:** Screening, monitoring, and treatment of conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and asthma.
 - **Health education and promotion:** Providing information on healthy lifestyles, disease prevention, and self-care.
 - **Family planning services:** Providing access to contraception and reproductive health information.
 - **Immunization programs:** Protecting individuals from vaccine-preventable diseases.
 - **Nutritional support:** Promoting healthy eating habits and providing nutritional counseling.
 - **Mental health services:** Addressing mental health issues and promoting mental well-being.
- In conclusion, Primary Health Care is a vital cornerstone of a robust and equitable healthcare system, promoting health and well-being for all individuals and communities.

World Health Day 2025: Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures

7th April is annually celebrated as World Health Day to mark the foundation of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948. It is a day to reflect on our shared responsibility towards building a healthier world. Health is not just the absence of disease—it is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, as defined by WHO and echoed in India's public health teachings. This year's theme, "Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures," highlighted the health of mothers and newborns, to remind us that how life begins matters deeply.

Across the world, and particularly in countries like India, mothers and newborns face numerous health challenges such as lack of proper care during pregnancy and unsafe deliveries, which result in the addition of unhealthy newborns to an already overburdened population. A safe birth and appropriate care help children grow up healthy. It is during this early stage that the foundation is laid for a person's future, both physical and mental.

India has made great progress over the years in improving health care access thanks to a plethora of impactful government schemes, which brings us closer to achieving Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs). More children are being institutionally delivered, with proper neonatal care. Despite this, in some regions, mothers still lack basic services. Some babies are born in unsafe conditions. Factors like poverty, illiteracy, and gender bias make the situation worse. This World Health Day, we must renew our vows to move closer to achieving our healthcare goals for all sections of society, which include not just health per se, but also broader aspects such as a pollution-free environment, healthy lifestyle habits, proper diets meeting all Recommended Dietary Allowances, etc., which play an equal if not more important role in the overall health of everyone in the community.

We must understand that health is not just a doctor's job but a shared effort. Families, communities, local leaders, also have a role to play. It is vital to understand that health is not just confined to the four walls of a hospital, but that it cuts across societal and economic strata because we are after all part of a community, and it is in the health of this community wherein lies our potential to reach the heights we truly can.



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World Health Day gives us a chance to ask ourselves: How can we ensure a healthier future? The answer lies in advocating proactively for not just medically sound individuals, but also reducing our carbon footprint, regular exercise, and practicing good hygiene. As responsible citizens, it is our duty to inculcate in ourselves as well as others practices of healthy lifestyle choices such as actively choosing nutritious diets, opting for environment-friendly alternatives for objects of daily use, abstaining from activities like smoking and alcohol consumption that have been scientifically proven to be detrimental not only to those who indulge in them but also to the community at large. While the theme this year focuses on Mother and Child Health, it is imperative to understand that they are not a standalone section of society, and it is only with good overall health of the entire community that we can strive for a better future for not just our mothers and children, but our nation. Jai Hind!

Commemorating World Health Day 2025, “Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures”

"In the chrysalis of a single breath, health unfolds its interminable dialectic — neither confined by the perinatal promise nor circumscribed by senescent despair." — Anonymous

The observance of World Health Day 2025, enshrined within the thematic locus “Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures”, does not merely commemorate a calendrical landmark of prophylactic evangelism. Rather, it emerges as an ontological crucible wherein the axiomatic interplay between nascent biophysiological integrity and futurist public health ideations becomes manifest. This year's theme, deceptively parsimonious in lexical economy, evokes an odyssey into the interstitial architecture of preventive medicine, equitable health systems, and the phenomenology of early-life interventions whose repercussions reverberate across transgenerational corridors.

In an era wherein planetary health remains perpetually beleaguered by the antagonisms of anthropogenic climate perturbations, inequitable vaccine sovereignties, syndemic entanglements, and the neo-capitalistic commodification of corporeality, the notion of “healthy beginnings” is less an anthropocentric desideratum and more a clarion call to recalibrate the anthropological substratum of health discourse. Indeed, the incipience of health is not a temporally isolated incident but an etiological genesis, *aprimummovens* that defines the trajectory of life course epidemiology.

"Every child begins the world anew, but some begin with the weight of centuries upon their lungs." — Dr. Elias Fontaine, relegated to the margins of discursive health policy frameworks, have now emerged as epicenters of scholarly urgency. The developmental origins of health and disease (DOHaD) hypothesis, now fortified by an avalanche of omics-level investigations, unambiguously articulates the irrefutable thesis that embryogenesis is not merely a biological phase but a biosocial event where social determinants are inscribed upon the very epigenome. Preterm births, intrauterine growth restrictions, and micronutrient deficiencies during gestation represent not only clinical adversities but also societal indictments of distributive injustice. This asymmetry is further



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aggravated in the geopolitical South, where obstetric infrastructure is dismantled by neocolonial debt dependencies and where maternal mortality ratios eclipse the thresholds of moral acceptability. Thus, the so-called “healthy beginning” becomes a geospatial privilege, an ontological luxury, and a statistical improbability in vast swathes of the world's subaltern populations.

"Hope is not a sentiment but a stratagem — a recursive choreography of policy, praxis, and the human will." — Frantz Fanon. The phrase “hopeful futures”, albeit poetically seductive, necessitates a hermeneutic deconstruction. In the biopolitical schema advanced by Foucault and expanded by Agamben, the future of health is not the linear extrapolation of medical advances, but the struggle over who gets to inhabit futurity with dignity, agency, and immunological resilience. As global health transitions into its third epoch, from eradication to sustainability to regeneration — we must interrogate the very scaffolding of hope: Is it algorithmic? Is it equitable? Is

it regenerative? Hope, in this context, is inextricably interlaced with digital health architectures, precision medicine, and planetary health paradigms. Artificial intelligence-driven diagnostics, blockchain-fortified vaccine distribution, and climate-resilient health systems are no longer speculative innovations but imperatives. Yet, technological acceleration must not occlude the psychosocial and cultural determinants of health. The future must be anthropotechnic, not technocratic.

Now, In the post-COVID biosphere, where long-haul Patho - physiologies and psychiatric decompensations have become endemic, the cognitive and emotional substrata of health have attained paramountcy. A healthy beginning must now entail psychocognitive resilience programs embedded within early childhood care protocols. Neuroplasticity, once a neuroscientific curiosity, is now a cornerstone of pediatric public health strategy. Furthermore, emerging fields such as salutogenesis and eudaimonic epidemiology demand that we rethink health as a state of existential flourishing rather than the sterile absence of disease. In this light, the hopeful future is not merely the deferment of mortality but the augmentation of life's aesthetic, spiritual, and cognitive intensities. The lexicon of global health must expand to accommodate not only survival metrics but also parameters of joy, meaning, and collective becoming.

"There can be no hopeful futures without just beginnings; and there can be no justice without planetary memory." — Amartya Sen .At the interstice

of anthropogenic environmental crises and zoonotic spillovers lies the imperative of planetary health — an epistemological framework that dissolves the Cartesian dualism between human bodies and ecological substrata. The gestational integrity of future generations is contingent upon the phytogeographical sanctity of today's biospheres. Deforestation, antimicrobial resistance, and microplastic ingestion are not environmental concerns alone but pediatric pathologies in waiting. Therefore, the teleology of “healthy beginnings” must be planetary in its imagination and intersectional in its policy.

To conclude, Health justice cannot be achieved through biomedical triumphalism alone; it demands planetary solidarity, ecological stewardship, and the reanimation of indigenous health cosmologies. World Health Day 2025, under the rubric “Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures,” should not be viewed as a ceremonial platitude but rather as a catalytic discursive terrain wherein the metanarratives of health equity, technoscientific promise, and moral universalism collide and reconfigure. It must be the moment where we disavow the health apartheid inherent in current global configurations and reimagine wellness as a sacred commons, inviolable, indivisible, and inherently political. To invoke the words of Hippocrates, “Wherever the art of medicine is loved, there is also a love of humanity.” Let this day serve not as an epitaph to unfulfilled health declarations but as a palimpsest upon which a new epoch of universal, luminous, and dignified health futures may be inscribed.

Commemorating World Health Day 2025, “Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures”

World Health Day 2025

World Health Day, observed annually on April 7th, is a global initiative to raise awareness about health and promote well-being worldwide. This year 2025, the theme- “Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures”, focuses on maternal and newborn health, aiming to reduce preventable deaths and promote well-being for women and infants.

The Maternal mortality ratio in India is 93 per 100,000 live births during the 2019–21 period, as per the Sample Registration System (SRS) Special Bulletin released on May 7, 2025. The Neonatal mortality rate is **19 per 1,000 live births** in 2021, according to the SRS report.

Maternal and new born health is a fundamental aspect of global public health, central to reducing preventable deaths and improving the overall quality of life. The wellbeing of mothers and their new borns reflects the strength of healthcare systems and equity within societies. Despite significant progress over recent decades, maternal and neonatal mortality rates remain unacceptably high, particularly in low and middle income countries.

The journey of a woman from birth to pregnancy is one of the most profound, emotional, and awe-inspiring transitions in life.

She is born into a world full of wonder, curiosity sparkling in her eyes, full of innocence and dream slearning her place in a world that often tries to define it for her. As she grows, she learns, about herself, about strength, about pain, about healing. Slowly, she becomes a woman, her body changing, her spirit deepening. Then one day, she carries life within her. A heartbeat that is not her own begins to echo within her. Her body shifts in ways she never imagined possible, growing, stretching, aching, yet holding space for a miracle. With every flutter and kick, she realizes, she is no longer just a woman but a mother in the making. She holds both the girl she was and the mother she is becoming. And when the day comes and she brings new life into the world, she is reborn too. ot weaker, not broken. But stronger, softer, wiser, and forever changed.

As Mahatma Gandhi once said- “Be the change that



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you wish to see in the world”. This change should begin at the individual & community level itself.

At the community level, engaging women in community groups focused on health education and mutual support will contribute significantly in improving maternal& neonatal health outcomes. These groups facilitate the sharing of information and encourage health seeking behaviours. In areas where traditional birth attendants are prevalent, integrating them into the formal health system through training and collaboration can enhance maternal care. We can also incorporate the use of technology & innovations. Mobile technology can be used to disseminate health information and reminders for antenatal and postnatal care appointments. Programs utilizing automated calls and messages have improved engagement and health outcomes. Moreover, Artificial Intelligence can assist in identifying high-risk pregnancies and optimizing resource allocation. For example, AI-based systems have been developed to monitor vital signs and predict complications, enabling timely interventions. Furthermore, strengthening clinical interventions by



promoting institutional deliveries, skilled birth attendants, emergency obstetric & newborn care, comprehensive antenatal care, diligent postnatal follow up will further reduce the complications that may arise.

Despite policy advances and better data systems, many challenges persist like health system financing gaps, workforce shortages, gender inequality and sociocultural barriers, inadequate postnatal care in rural regions, high rates of cesarean sections in urban areas without corresponding postnatal support. By focussing on these challenges & working towards a

common goal we can further reduce the numbers. Improving maternal and neonatal health is not just a healthcare objective—it is a human rights imperative and a development necessity. By addressing social determinants, improving access to quality care, and ensuring every mother and child receives timely, respectful, and evidence-based interventions, we can move closer to a future where no mother or newborn dies from preventable causes. Collaborative efforts between government, healthcare providers, civil society, and the community are the pillars that will ensure long-term, sustainable impact.

World Health Day 2025: Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures.

World Health Day, celebrated on 7 April 2025, kicked off a year-long campaign on maternal and newborn health. The campaign, titled Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures, urged governments and the health community to ramp up efforts to end preventable maternal and newborn deaths, and to prioritize women's longer-term health and well-being. This task was critical. Tragically, based on currently published estimates, 260 000 women lost their life due to pregnancy or childbirth each year, while over 2 million babies died in their first month of life and around 2 million more were stillborn. That's roughly 1 preventable death every 7 seconds. Based on current trends, a staggering 4 out of 5 countries were off track to meet targets for improving maternal survival by 2030 and 1 in 3 failed to meet targets for reducing newborn deaths.

(<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2025>)

Aligning with this vision, the Government of India, through the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, continued to strengthen its commitment to equitable, accessible, and quality healthcare. Over the past decade, India's health sector has made notable strides through initiatives like National Health Mission, which have improved maternal and child health, expanded digital health access, and enhanced infrastructure and services. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has made substantial strides in improving India's public health outcomes through various key initiatives and programs. The National Health Mission (NHM) has played a central role in this progress. To highlight these efforts and their impact, the following sections show key national health initiatives driving India's progress toward universal health coverage and health equity for all.

- MMR (Maternal Mortality Ratio) in India dropped from 130 (2014-16) to 97 (2018-20) per 1,00,000 live births – a decline of 33 points. Over the last 30 years (1990–2020), MMR declined by 83% in India. Global comparison: Global MMR reduced by 42% in the same period.
- IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) dropped from 39 (2014) to 28 (2020) per 1,000 live births.
- NMR (Neonatal Mortality Rate) reduced from 26 (2014) to 20 (2020) per 1,000 live births.
- U5MR (Under-5 Mortality Rate) declined from 45



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(2014) to 32 (2020) per 1,000 live births.

Key interventions for Maternal and Child Health in India.

- Institutional deliveries on the rise: 88.6% under NHM (NFHS-5, 2019-21)
- Janani Suraksha Yojana (NSY, since 2005): 36.77 lakh women benefited (April-Sept, 2024)
- Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (NSSK): Ensures complete free care for pregnant women and sick infants- covering delivery including C-section, transport, diagnostic and treatment in public hospitals
- Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Ahiyan (PMSMA): Free, quality antenatal care on the 9th of every month since 2016, over 6 crore women examined as of April 2025
- Extended PMSMA Strategy: focus on High risk pregnancies with financial incentives for three extra visits plus ASHA support till delivery.



- SUMAN (2019): Assures zero cost respectful and quality care for women and new born in every public health facilities.
- LAQSHYA (2017): Aims to improve labour room and maternity OT quality in public hospitals. 1016 labour rooms and 809 maternity OT certified by Dec 2024.
- Maternal Death Surveillance and Response (MDSR): Conducted at facility and community levels to identify causes of maternal deaths and implement corrective actions for improving obstetric care.
- Mother and Child Protection (MCP) Card & Safe Motherhood Booklet: Distributed to educate pregnant women on nutrition, rest, pregnancy danger signs, government schemes, and benefits of institutional deliveries.
- Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Portal: A name-based digital platform to track pregnant women and newborns, ensuring timely antenatal, delivery, and postnatal care.
- Anaemia Mukh Bharat (AMB): Part of POSHAN Abhiyan; focuses on testing, treatment, and prevention of anaemia in adolescents and pregnant women through nutrition, awareness, and addressing non-nutritional causes.
- Birth Waiting Homes (BWH): Set up in remote and tribal areas to improve access and promote institutional deliveries.
- Village Health, Sanitation & Nutrition Day (VHSND): Monthly outreach at Anganwadi Centres for maternal and child care services in collaboration with MoWCD.
- Outreach Camps: Organized in tribal and difficult areas to deliver maternal healthcare, raise awareness, mobilize communities, and monitor high-risk pregnancies.

India's advancements in public health, especially in maternal and child care, reflect a strong commitment to equitable and inclusive healthcare. As a result there are significant improvements in MCH parameters reflected in the following data.

India vs Global Progress (1990 to 2020)

Indicators	India Reduction (%)	Global Reduction (%)
Maternal mortality rate	83%	42%
Neonatal mortality rate	65%	51%
Infant mortality rate	69%	55%
Under 5 mortality rate	75%	58%

<https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2025/apr/doc202546535301.pdf>

Our mission and vision towards achieving the slogan 'Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures' will certainly make The World Health Day a certain development of Social and Equitable Health Care for All.



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