



## **Key Messages for World Pneumonia Day**

### **Pneumonia: Solutions for a Deadly Disease**

#### **Pneumonia is a problem with solutions**

- More than ever before, we now know how to protect and prevent children from catching pneumonia, and how to treat those suffering with this illness.
- Every 20 seconds, pneumonia kills another child. That's 4,300 child deaths every day, and a staggering 1.5 million child deaths every year from a preventable, treatable disease.<sup>1</sup>
- Now is the time to put knowledge into action to deliver these solutions to all children around the world.

#### **We can protect from pneumonia**

- Exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life is an important and easy way to help protect children from pneumonia and many other diseases.<sup>2</sup>
- Other strategies, like good nutrition for older children<sup>3</sup>, hand-washing<sup>4</sup>, and reducing indoor air pollution from cook stoves<sup>5</sup> and tobacco smoke<sup>6</sup>, can also help protect children from pneumonia.

#### **Preventing pneumonia before it occurs is key**

- Vaccines are a safe and effective tool for preventing pneumonia before it occurs.
- Vaccines against two of the main causes of life-threatening pneumonia - pneumococcus (*Streptococcus pneumoniae*) and Hib (*Haemophilus influenzae b*)<sup>7</sup> – are used throughout the developed world.
- However, millions of children in developing countries still lack access to these life-saving vaccines.
- Measles and pertussis (ie. whooping cough) vaccines can prevent infections that can lead to pneumonia as a complication.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Black R, Cousens S, Johnson H, *et al.* Global, regional, and national causes of child mortality in 2008: a systemic analysis. *Lancet.* 2010; 375:1969-87.

<sup>2</sup> Roth DE, Caulfield LE, Ezzati M, Black RE. Acute lower respiratory tract infections in childhood: opportunities for reducing the global burden through nutritional interventions. *Bull World Health Organ* 2008; 86: 356-64.

<sup>3</sup> Roth DE, Caulfield LE, Ezzati M, Black RE. Acute lower respiratory tract infections in childhood: opportunities for reducing the global burden through nutritional interventions. *Bull World Health Organ* 2008; 86: 356-64.

<sup>4</sup> Luby SP, Agboatwalla M, Freikin DR, Painter J, Billhimer W, Altar A, Hoekstra RM. Effect of handwashing on child health: a randomised controlled trial. *Lancet.* 2005; 366:225-233.

<sup>5</sup> Smith KR, Sarnet JM, Romieu I, Bruce N. Indoor air pollution in developing countries and acute lower respiratory infections in children. *Thorax.* 2000;55:518-32.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2006.

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/report/index.html>. Accessed September 7, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> O'Brien K, Wolfson L, Watt J, *et al.* Burden of Disease caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* in children younger than 5 years: global estimates. *Lancet.* 2009; 374:893-902.

<sup>8</sup> Mahdi SA, Levine OS, Hajjeh R, Mansoor OD, Cherian T. Vaccines to prevent pneumonia and improve child survival. *Bull World Health Organ.* 2008;86:365-72.



### **Children should have access to effective and affordable treatment**

- The treatment for most types of serious pneumonia is usually antibiotics, which typically cost less than one dollar per dose.<sup>9</sup>
- Tragically, only an estimated 1 of every 5 children with pneumonia receives antibiotics.<sup>10</sup>
- Effective “case management” strategies can help to ensure that children receive the right treatment for pneumonia quickly, even in the poorest communities.<sup>11</sup>

*Now is the time to take action to deliver these life-saving solutions to all children and give children a chance for a better life.*

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<sup>9</sup> Sazawal S, Black RE, Pneumonia Case Management Trials Group. Effect of pneumonia case management on mortality in neonates, infants, and pre-school children: a meta-analysis of community based trials. *Lancet Infect Dis.* 2003;3:547-56.

<sup>10</sup> Figure based on multiple Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), cited in: Wardlaw T, Johansson EW, Hodge M. Pneumonia: the forgotten killer of children. New York: UNICEF, The World Bank; 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Sazawal S, Black RE, Pneumonia Case Management Trials Group. Effect of pneumonia case management on mortality in neonates, infants, and pre-school children: a meta-analysis of community based trials. *Lancet Infect Dis.* 2003;3:547-56.