In pregnancy, infections are a key cause of anemia and can be prevented by sleeping under a bednet and taking intermittent preventive treatment (IPTp) for malaria and deworming pills.

For infants, young children, and mothers, delayed cord clamping, sleeping under a bednet, exclusive breastfeeding, and birth spacing reduce the risk of becoming anemic.

For young children, continued breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding (including micronutrients), preventing and treating malaria, and taking deworming pills can prevent anemia and promote healthy growth.

In pregnancy, anemia can be prevented by taking iron folic acid (IFA) supplements.

In adolescence, IFA supplements and deworming pills help prevent anemia. Family planning delays the age at first birth.

In 2011-2012, 29% of pregnant women in Benin consumed 90 or more IFA tablets.

Not enough women are taking IPTp to prevent malaria during pregnancy (23%, 2011-2012)

One third (33%) of infants in Benin are exclusively breastfed during the first six months after birth (2011-2012)

In 2011-2012, 39% of children 6-23 months of age consumed foods rich in iron*

More than one-third (35%) of married adolescent girls expressed an unmet need for family planning (2011-2012)

A multisectoral approach to prevent anemia will save lives and improve the wellbeing of mothers, infants, and children.

*Includes meat (including organ meat), fish, poultry, and eggs
Anemia has substantial negative effects on the health and economic wellbeing of nations and communities. Children with anemia experience irrevocable cognitive and developmental delays and exhibit decreased worker productivity as adults.\(^1\) Globally, maternal anemia increases the risk of pre-term delivery and low birth weight, and iron-deficiency anemia underlies 115,000 maternal deaths and 591,000 perinatal deaths each year.\(^2\)

**Prevalence of anemia among children 6-59 months and women 15-49 years, by department**  
*Source: Benin DHS, 2011-2012*

![Prevalence graph](image)

**Trends in the prevalence of anemia in Benin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Children 6-59 months of age</th>
<th>Women 15-49 years of age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mild</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The DHS hemoglobin levels used to diagnose anemia in non-pregnant women 15-49 years of age in grams/dL are: Mild 10.0-10.9; Moderate 7.0-9.9; Severe <7.0; Any <12.0.

**Status of Policies or Strategies to Support Reductions in Anemia**

- IFA for pregnant women
- IFA for women of reproductive age
- IFA for adolescent girls
- Iron and/or folic acid fortification legislation
- Delayed cord clamping
- Dietary diversity for complementary feeding
- Micronutrient powders for children
- Long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) for household use
- Indoor residual spraying
- National policy on sanitation
- IPTp for pregnant women
- Malaria diagnosis and treatment
- Deworming for children
- Deworming for pregnant women
- Breastfeeding

*Information from the Global database on the Implementation of Nutrition Action (GINA) (https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en) or country documentation. The status of policies and strategies have been identified to the best of our knowledge. Revisions and updates are welcome.*

Evidence-informed WHO guidance can be found here: [http://www.who.int/elena/en/](http://www.who.int/elena/en/)
Anemia is a Preventable Condition—Simple Interventions Can Have a Huge Impact

Increase iron uptake and stores

Overall, IFA supplementation among pregnant women decreased from 2006 to 2011-2012

- Received any IFA during pregnancy
  - Took <60
  - Took 60-89
  - Took 90+

Contraception use fell among married women from 2001 to 2011-2012

- Breast milk, milk, or milk products
- 4+ food groups
- Minimum meal frequency
- All 3 IYCF practices

Few children 6-23 months old were fed according to 3 key Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices in 2011-2012

- Exclusive breastfeeding of children <6 months has fallen since 2006

Reduce iron losses and infection

Insecticide-treated mosquito net (ITN) use increased more than threefold from 2006 to 2011-2012*

- Most pregnant women but not enough children received deworming medication in 2011-2012*

Exclusive breastfeeding of children <6 months has fallen since 2006

- The percentage of households with an improved latrine/toilet has increased but remains low*

All data is from Benin Demographic and Health Surveys unless otherwise noted

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*Definition of 'improved latrine/toilet' has changed slightly across years. See Demographic and Health Surveys
Multiple Sectors Play a Role in Anemia Prevention and Treatment

Stunting and anemia share similar risk factors and are responsive to many of the same interventions.

**Agriculture**
- Increase income and reduce poverty
- Production of biofortified and iron-rich crops
- Small livestock/poultry
- Dietary diversity

**Health**
- Iron supplementation
- Deworming
- Breastfeeding and complementary feeding
- Family planning
- Malaria prevention and treatment
- Delayed cord clamping

**Water and Sanitation**
- Improved latrines
- Handwashing
- Access to clean water
- Livestock management
- Infectious disease prevention

**Education**
- Female literacy
- Health education
- Hygiene education
- Family planning education
- Nutrition education

Data Sources:
Profile prepared September 2015.

This profile is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement AID-OAA-A-11-00031 (SPRING), managed by Jh Research & Training Institute, Inc. (Jh) with partners Helen Keller International, the Manoff Group, Save the Children, and the International Food Policy Research Institute. The contents are the responsibility of Jh and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.