**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.

**Anemia can be prevented across the lifespan**

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

**Only 3% of pregnant women in Rwanda consumed 90 or more IFA tablets or syrups (2014-2015)**

**Almost 3/4 of pregnant women reported using an insecticide-treated mosquito net (73%, 2014-2015)**

**87% of infants in Rwanda are exclusively breastfed during the first six months after birth (2014-2015)**

**During 2014-2015, 20% of children 6-23 months of age consumed foods rich in iron**

**3.6% of married adolescent girls expressed an unmet need for family planning (2014-2015)**

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

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

*Source: Rwanda DHS 2014-15*

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### Trends in the prevalence of anemia in Rwanda

#### Children 6-59 months of age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014–2015</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The DHS hemoglobin levels used to diagnose anemia in children 6-59 months in grams/dL are: Mild 10.0-10.9; Moderate 7.0-9.9; Severe <7.0; Any <11.0.

#### Women 15-49 years of age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014–2015</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>19.2%</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 10.0-11.9; 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

IFA supplementation among pregnant women increased from 2010 to 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IFA supplementation</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2014-2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Took &lt;60</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took 60-89</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took 90+</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Received any IFA during pregnancy

Contraception use plateaued among married women since 2010

Few children 6-23 months old were fed according to 3 key Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices 2014-2015

Breast milk, milk, or milk products

- 4+ food groups
- Minimum meal frequency
- All 3 IYCF practices

Reduce iron losses and infection

Insecticide-treated mosquito net (ITN) use has not changed since 2010

- 2007-2008
- 2010
- 2014-2015

The majority of children but not enough women received deworming medication in 2014-2015

- 2010
- 2014-2015

Exclusive breastfeeding of children <6 months has not changed since 2005

- 2005
- 2010
- 2014-2015

The percentage of households with an improved latrine has plateaued since 2010

- 2005
- 2010
- 2014-2015

All data is from Rwanda Demographic and Health Surveys unless otherwise noted.
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:
National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NSR) [Rwanda], Ministry of Health (MOH) [Rwanda], and ICF International. 2013. Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey 2010. Calverton, Maryland, USA: NSR, MOH, and ICF International.
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