



## Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI)

The Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) was launched in Pakistan in 1978 to protect children by immunizing them against childhood tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and measles. Later, with the support of development partners, a number of new vaccines e.g. hepatitis B, haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and pneumococcal vaccine (PCV) were introduced in 2002, 2009 and 2012 respectively and inactivated polio vaccine in 2015. Rota vaccine was introduced in 2017 and typhoid conjugated vaccine (TCV) in 2019 in Sindh and in Punjab and Islamabad in 2021. Measles vaccine is being replaced by Measles Rubella (MR) which also protects against rubella and congenital rubella syndrome (CRS).

The programme targets almost 7.5 Million children annually across the country and approximately same number of pregnant women against Tetanus. Immunizing children with these vaccines may avert up to 17% of childhood mortality in Pakistan and thus help contribute towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, on reducing child morbidity and mortality.

### Objectives

- To increase equitable coverage of immunization against vaccine preventable diseases (VPD)
- To improve immunization services through expansion of service delivery and cold chain
- To decrease VPD associated morbidity and mortality

### Targets of EPI

- Measles and Rubella elimination
- Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus (MNT) elimination
- Polio Eradication through strengthen RI
- Decrease VPD associated morbidity and mortality in children 0-23 months

### Achievements of EPI

- Shifting of Federal and Provincial Programmes budget from development to recurrent side
- Centralized procurement of vaccine and logistics in post devolution scenario by ensuring continuous vaccine availability
- 10 percent increase immunization coverage gain all over the country over the period of two year according to Third Party Verification Immunization Survey (2020)
- Introduction of IPV-2 in Routine Immunization as a part of end game polio strategy
- Switch of Pneumococcal Vaccines (PCV 10 ) to Pneumococcal Vaccines (PCV) 13 and its successful implementation across Pakistan
- Effective and efficient distribution of more than 70 million COVID-19 Vaccine doses across the country
- Establishment of COVID-19 monitoring cell at Federal EPI
- Development and dissemination of CVCs and vaccine specific guidelines and SOPs
- Introduction of Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) in Sindh, Punjab and Islamabad
- Refurbishment and rebranding of health facilities and EPI fixed sites
- Up scaling of Sehat Tahaffuz Helpline (1166) for COVID-19 vaccination to provide the information and to address the grievances
- Expansion of Cold Chain Capacity by installing 11,277 ILRs through CCEOP across the country
- Internalizing EPI-PEI Synergy
- Distribution of 1254 motorbikes for vaccinators in AJK, GB and Islamabad

### Immunization Coverage across Pakistan

According to the recent largest survey on routine immunization " Third Party Verification Immunization Survey (TPVICS)" **76.1** per cent of children under the age of 2 years have received the full course of vaccinations under Expanded Program on Immunization.

Of the remaining children, over one in every six or 17.7 per cent have been vaccinated partially while 5.9 per cent of them never received vaccines, according to results from Third Party Verification Immunization Survey (TPVICS).

According to the survey **89.9** per cent vaccinated children in Punjab, **88.8pc** in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, **68.4pc** in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, **61.1pc** in Sindh and **37.6pc** in Balochistan.

The TPVICS survey showed **10 % gain** in immunization coverage all over the country over the period of two years. Because according to PDHS 2017-18 , 66 % children were fully immunized under the age of 2 years.

The Expanded Program on Immunization has contributed significantly decreasing childhood morbidity and mortality due to vaccine preventable diseases. A child needs only 5 visits during the first year and one visit during the second year of his/her life to complete the vaccination with 6 visits against 11 dreadful diseases.