

The ELIMINATE Project

Maternal/Neonatal Tetanus (MNT)

What is MNT?

In 40 countries around the world, maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT) can quickly turn the joy of childbirth into tragedy. MNT kills one baby every nine minutes. Its effects are excruciating — tiny newborns suffer repeated, painful convulsions and extreme sensitivity to light and touch. There is little hope of survival. And tetanus kills mothers too.

Who suffers from MNT?

MNT is caused when tetanus spores, found in soil everywhere, come into contact with open cuts during childbirth. The disease strikes the poorest of the poor, the geographically hard to reach and those without health care.

Can MNT be stopped?

Yes! MNT is highly preventable. Just three doses of a 60-cent immunization protect mothers, who then pass on the immunity to their future babies. Together, Kiwanis and UNICEF can stop this disease.

Why hasn't MNT been eliminated already?

UNICEF *has* helped to successfully eliminate MNT in many countries. But in 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America, it still strikes babies and mothers who have little or no access to health care — either because they are poor, live in remote areas or are caught in humanitarian emergencies. More funds and resources are needed to reach all babies and mothers at risk.

What will it take to eliminate MNT from the Earth by 2015?

129 million mothers and their future babies must be immunized. This requires vaccines, syringes, safe storage, transportation, thousands of skilled staff and more. It will take \$110 million — and the dedicated work of UNICEF and every member of the Kiwanis family.

Why focus on this issue?

It is unacceptable that innocent newborns and their mothers suffer and die from MNT when it can be prevented so easily. This is also an amazing opportunity to reach the poorest, most neglected mothers and babies with lifesaving health care. Developing delivery systems for MNT vaccines will blaze a trail to provide additional desperately needed services to these marginalized families.

What is the ELIMINATE partnership?

Hand in hand, Kiwanis and UNICEF will eliminate MNT and change the world. Kiwanis' commitment, vision and strength in reaching communities and leaders will help wipe out this cruel, centuries-old disease and pave the way for other interventions. UNICEF has staff working in the most isolated corners of the globe and an unbeatable supply chain.

