

BRIEF



High-impact Intervention for Healthier Women and Babies

Better Maternal Health & Birth Outcomes

The WHO/UNICEF formulation of Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (known as UNIMMAP MMS) contains 15 essential vitamins and minerals, including iron and folic acid, for pregnant women and their babies. As a prenatal supplement, MMS has been the standard of care in high-income countries for many years, but less than 1 in 10 women in low- and middle-income countries have access to it.

MMS is a proven and powerful way to ensure the health and well-being of vulnerable mothers and babies, no matter where they live. It drives better maternal health, improves birth outcomes, and encourages healthy newborn development,ⁱ and it provides the foundation for millions of pregnant women and their babies to live better, healthier lives.

*Throughout this document, both MMS and UNIMMAP MMS are referenced, however, **UNIMMAP MMS is the only internationally recognized formula that is backed by over 25 years of evidence** in support of its effectiveness and ability to improve pregnancy outcomes in low- and middle-income countries.*

25 Years of Evidence

Over 25 years of evidence have made the benefits clear: MMS doesn't just improve lives—it saves them. MMS improves birth outcomes by reducing the risk of babies being born stillborn, or born too small, or too soon.ⁱⁱ MMS has even more benefits for women who are anemic or underweight at the start of their pregnancies, which can put them (and their babies) at higher risk of life-threatening complications. Just one dose of MMS a day helps protect women against maternal anemia and its consequences.

When a woman takes MMS during pregnancy, she has a 27% lower risk of giving birth to a low birthweight baby born too small and too soon.ⁱⁱⁱ For pregnant women with anemia, taking MMS reduces the risk of death in infants 6-months old by 29%, and for mothers who are underweight, MMS decreases the risk of a premature birth by 16%.^{iv}

A Lifetime of Health

MMS has the potential to improve a child's cognitive and behavioral development, setting them up for a lifetime of better health. Poor nutrition during the early stages of a child's life can cause irreversible damage to their growing brain. Going undernourished can affect their ability to do well in school and earn a good living—and make it more difficult for a child and their family to rise out of poverty. It can also set the stage for future chronic diseases, and a lifetime of health problems.^v It can help break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition—when a mother is malnourished while she is pregnant, her pregnancy is more likely to have complications, and her baby is more likely to be born too small or too soon. Proper nutrition, especially in the first 1,000 days of life, can set up success for generations.

Building Resilience

MMS builds resiliency and helps families withstand and recover from conflicts, epidemics, and climate change. As the global temperature rises, so do the risks of preterm births, low birthweight, and stillborn babies. Nutrition interventions such as MMS play a foundational role in helping families better prepare for, withstand, and recover from current and future crises.^{vi}

A Best Bet for Global Development

MMS offers a \$37 return of every \$1 invested and has been named one of the best bets for global development by the Copenhagen Consensus Center, a think tank composed of leading economists that specializes in identifying the most effective solutions for global development challenges.

A Better Standard of Care

MMS has the power to be a social equalizer, ensuring that pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries have access to the same standard of care that has been available to women in high-income countries for many years. Supporting the nutrition of women and girls is also essential to deliver on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and build a better world for everyone.

MMS helps mothers, children, and communities not just survive, but thrive.

Together, we can all go #FurtherWith15.



30+ COUNTRIES ARE TRANSITIONING TO MMS

The image features a world map with a dark blue background. A horizontal pink banner across the middle of the map contains the text '30+ COUNTRIES ARE TRANSITIONING TO MMS'. The map itself is color-coded: countries where MMS activities are present are shaded in light purple, while countries without are in light grey. The shaded countries include Mexico, Central America, South America (primarily Brazil), several countries in Africa (including Nigeria, Kenya, and others), India, and various countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region.

Visit hmbconsortium.org for an interactive world map of MMS activities.

As of March 2025

The Opportunity

- Demand for MMS has never been greater. More than 30 countries have introduced or scaled up MMS in their health care systems. At least 50 countries are interested or actively considering introduction.
- 16 million women in 16 high burden countries will receive a package of antenatal care interventions, including MMS, through UNICEF's new *Improving Maternal Nutrition Acceleration Plan*.
- Resources, tools, and technical support are available to support introduction and scale up of MMS.

Learn More

The evidence is clear, and so is the need. Now through 2030, it is estimated that more than 130 million women will need MMS annually. That number will continue to grow, as more countries around the globe introduce and scale up MMS in their antenatal care systems.

UN organizations, philanthropies, foundations, and implementing partners are working together with country governments to support with supply, research, investments, and programming to make MMS available and accessible to pregnant women.

The global movement to improve maternal and newborn health has begun. Get involved and learn more: www.furtherwith15.org.

i Bourassa et al. 2019. Review of the evidence regarding the use of antenatal multiple micronutrient supplementation in low- and middle-income countries. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. WHO antenatal care recommendations for a positive pregnancy experience. July 2020. Nutritional interventions update: multiple micronutrient supplements during pregnancy. WHO.

ii Smith, E. R. et al. Modifiers of the Effect of Maternal Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation on Stillbirth, Birth Outcomes, and Infant Mortality: A Meta-Analysis of Individual Patient Data from 17 Randomized Trials in Low-Income and Middle-Income Countries. *Lancet Glob. Heal.* 2017, 5 (11). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29025632/>.

iii Wang, Dongqing Adu-Afarwuah, Seth et al. 2025. The effects of prenatal multiple micronutrient supplementation and small-quantity lipid-based nutrient supplementation on small vulnerable newborn types in low-income and middle-income countries: a meta-analysis of individual participant data. *Lancet Glob. Heal.* Volume 13, Issue 2, e298 - e308, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(24\)00449-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(24)00449-2)

iv Gomes et al., 2022. Multiple micronutrient supplements versus iron-folic acid supplements and maternal anemia outcomes: an iron dose analysis. *Ann. N.Y. Acad. Sci.*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.14756>

v Halim et al, 2015. [The economic consequences of selected maternal and child nutrition interventions in low- and middle- income countries: A systematic review of recent literature, 2000–2013](#). *BMC Women's Health*.

vi Bloem et al, 2007. [Preventing and controlling micronutrient deficiencies in populations affected by an emergency](#). WHO, WFP, UNICEF.



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