



# ROTAVIRUS FACTS

- **Diarrhea is one of the world’s leading killers of children, and rotavirus is the most common cause of severe diarrhea.**<sup>1</sup> Rotavirus kills about 200,000 children each year and hospitalizes hundreds of thousands more.<sup>2,3</sup>
- **Every child is vulnerable, and rotavirus strikes everywhere.**<sup>4</sup> It is highly contagious and resilient. Interventions that prevent other forms of diarrhea—such as improvements in hygiene, sanitation and drinking water—do not adequately prevent the spread of rotavirus.
- **Without access to treatment for the dehydration it can cause, rotavirus can be a death sentence.**
- **Vaccination is the best way to protect children from rotavirus.**<sup>5</sup> Rotavirus vaccines are already saving lives and improving health in the countries where they are in use, with countries reporting swift and significant reductions in cases of severe diarrhea.<sup>6,7</sup>
- **Rotavirus vaccines are a safe, cost-effective solution for developing countries to prioritize now.**<sup>8-15</sup>
- **The World Health Organization recommends that rotavirus vaccines be introduced into every country’s national immunization program.**<sup>7,9-11,16-18</sup> Despite this, as of September 2016, only 82 countries have introduced rotavirus vaccines into their national immunization programs, and 6 countries have introduced rotavirus vaccines sub-nationally.<sup>19</sup>
- **More than 90% of rotavirus deaths occur in low-income countries in Asia and Africa, where vaccination is not in widespread use.**<sup>1,2</sup> Gavi and its partners have supported more than 30 low-income countries in introducing rotavirus vaccines. This represents tremendous progress, but there is more work to be done to reach all of the children who need these vaccines.
- **The need is also great in middle-income countries where rotavirus and diarrheal disease, more broadly, are major causes of child illness and hospitalizations.**
- **Hundreds of thousands of illnesses and tens of thousands of deaths can be prevented through rotavirus vaccination.**<sup>13</sup>

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