

Country Disease Outlook

Ghana

August 2023



World Health
Organization

African Region

Background

The Republic of Ghana is a country in west Africa bordering Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Togo. It is a lower middle-income country with a GDP per capita of US\$ 2,176 (2022) and a population of 33.5 million (2022).

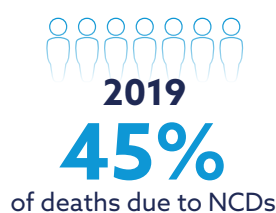
Key points

- ◆ Ghana has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable disease (NCDs), with the latter making up 45% of deaths in 2019.
- ◆ Ghana improved its child survival rates between 2015 and 2021, however it is not yet meeting the SDG targets for neonatal or under-five mortality rates.
- ◆ Ghana is endemic for three of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA). In 2020, 84% of the 7.5 million people targeted were treated with MDA.
- ◆ Following a small dip in 2020, Ghana's vaccination coverage rates were restored in 2021, reaching 98% with the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine and 94% with the first dose of measles-containing vaccine. It is important for Ghana to maintain its high vaccination coverage through routine immunization while also considering how to implement catch-up vaccination strategies in the country to ensure that no children are left unprotected from vaccine-preventable diseases into the future.

UHC/CN

Universal Health Coverage/Communicable
and Non-communicable Diseases
WHO Regional Office for Africa





Broad disease outlook

The country has a high burden of both communicable (such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS) and non-communicable disease (NCDs). The latter was estimated to have caused 45% of deaths in 2019.

Communicable diseases

Malaria

Malaria remains a public health problem in Ghana with an estimated 5.4 million cases in 2021 (with an incidence rate of 164.3 cases per 1000), resulting in 12,557 deaths. The country had been meeting the targets set by the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria in 2015-20, although the incidence rate did not decline sufficiently in 2021 and remained above the GTS target.

Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

Incidence of tuberculosis for Ghana was 136 cases per 100,000 people, in 2021. The mortality rate of TB cases (all forms, excluding HIV coinfection) has declined slightly since 2015, going from 37 to 36 per 100,000 population in 2021. The TB mortality rate among HIV-positive people has decreased more significantly from 20 to 11 in the same period.

Ghana has not met the 95-95-95 goals:

- ▲ 71% of people living with HIV that know their status.
- ▲ 98% of people living with HIV who know their status are on treatment.
- ▲ 79% of people living with HIV and on treatment who are virally suppressed.

Approximately 245,223 people were receiving anti-retroviral treatment in 2021.

Neglected tropical diseases

Ghana was endemic for three of the five of the NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA), namely lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis. In 2020, 6.3 million of the 7.5 million targeted (84%) were treated with MDA.

Other notable NTDs that remain endemic are human Africa trypanosomiasis (*gambiense*), leishmaniasis (cutaneous), Buruli ulcer, taeniasis and cysticercosis, leprosy, and rabies.

Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are a significant health problem in Ghana. The age-standardised mortality rate across four major NCDs (Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Cancer and Diabetes) was high at 750 per 100,000 in males and 563 in females in 2021.

Ghana has implemented initial efforts on NCD guidelines, tobacco taxes, tobacco health warnings, tobacco advertising bans, and tobacco media campaigns, however there is very limited progress against the remaining indicators. These include those relating to tobacco smoke free/pollution, all of the indicators relating to alcohol, salt policies, trans fats policies, marketing to children and physical activity awareness.

Childhood Immunization

Ghana's coverage rates of vaccination in children had historically been meeting the 90% target levels, although the rates for some vaccines (e.g. measles, rotavirus) dipped in 2020. In 2021, coverage for the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine was 98%, while the coverage rate for the first dose of measles vaccine was 94%. It is important for Ghana to maintain its high vaccination coverage through routine immunization while also considering how to implement catch-up vaccination strategies in the country to ensure that no children are left unprotected from vaccine-preventable diseases into the future.

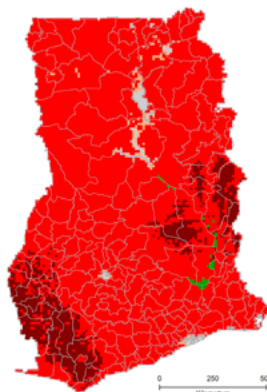
Child survival

Based on the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) estimates, the under-5 mortality rate has fallen from 55 to 44 per 1,000 live births between 2015 and 2021, although it is still well above the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. Similarly, the neonatal mortality rate decreased from 27 to 23 per 1,000 live births in the same period, remaining above the SDG target of 12.

MALARIA

POPULATION AT RISK IN 2022	TOTAL MALARIA CASES IN 2021	TOTAL MALARIA DEATHS IN 2021
32.8 million people	5.4 million	12,557

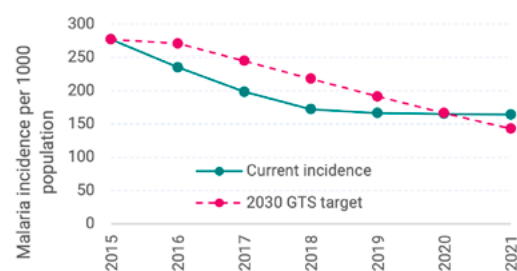
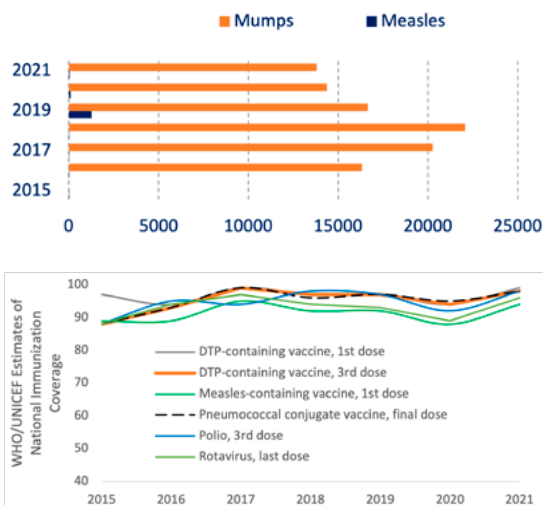
ITN use in children under five years 54.1% and 58.7% use of ACTs among those with fever for whom care was sought and received a finger or heel prick



Plasmodium falciparum malaria prevalence in children in Ghana in 2020. Estimates from the Malaria Atlas project

Malaria incidence in Ghana since 2015 compared to GTS targets shows that Ghana reversed its targets in 2020

EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN



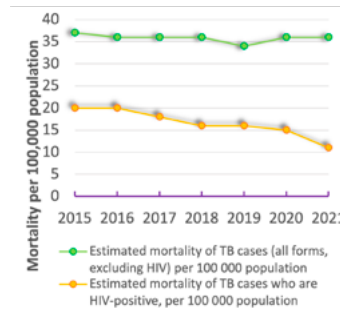
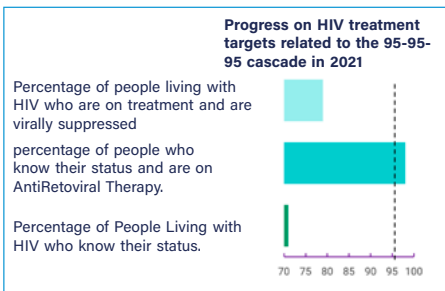
Zero dose children 8,796 Under-immunized 17,591

WUENIC estimates show that vaccination coverage bounced back to 2018 levels after a dip in 2021.

Mumps is a major public health problem in Ghana although a few cases of measles are also reported.

HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS

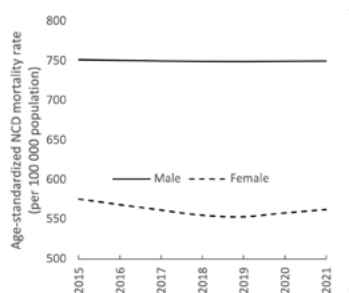
- 245,223** people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021
 - 78%** Treatment success rate for HIV-positive TB cases
 - 38%** of children (aged <math>< 5</math> years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment
- 8.9%** Domestic funding for TB
37% Domestic funding for HIV



- Indicator 1 - Targets
- Indicator 2 - CRV Mortality
- Indicator 3 - Surveys
- Indicator 4 - NCD policy and Plan
- Indicator 5A - Tobacco taxes
- Indicator 5B - Tobacco smoke free/polution
- Indicator 5C - Tobacco health warning
- Indicator 5D - Tobacco advertising ban
- Indicator 5E - Tobacco media campaign
- Indicator 6A - Alcohol availability
- Indicator 6B - Alcohol advertising restrictions
- Indicator 6C - Alcohol taxes
- Indicator 7A - Salt policies
- Indicator 7B - Trans fats policies
- Indicator 7C - Marketing to children
- Indicator 8 - Physical activity awareness
- Indicator 9 - NCD guidelines

NCD PROGRESS INDICATORS

- Achieved
- Partially achieved
- Not achieved/Unknown



NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

Endemic NTDS requiring Preventive Chemotherapy (PC)

- Lymphatic filariasis
- Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
- Schistosomiasis
- Trachoma (Validated as having been eliminated)
- Onchocerciasis (non-endemic)

PC-NTDs treatment in 2021
7.5 targeted for MDA
6.3 Million treated with MDA

OTHER MAJOR NTDS

- Human Africa trypanosomiasis (*gambiense*)
- Leishmaniasis (cutaneous)
- Buruli ulcer
- Taeniasis and cysticercosis
- Leprosy
- Rabies