

# How to add deworming to vitamin A distribution



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Cover image: *Preschool child receiving a deworming tablet in Lao People's Democratic Republic,*  
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## *Acknowledgements*

The invaluable input of the following colleagues is gratefully acknowledged:

**Sharada Pandey**, Chief of the Nutrition Section, Child Health Division, Ministry of Health, Nepal

**Maaïke Arts**, Project Officer, Nutrition/Early Childhood Care, UNICEF, Viet Nam

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*Financial support for the production of this manual was generously provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.*

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## Summary

### Deworming drugs:

- are safe,
- are single dose,
- cost less than US\$ 0.02/dose,
- are simple to administer.

### Why delivering vitamin A capsules and deworming tablets together makes sense... for health reasons:

- Worm infections contribute to vitamin A deficiency.
- Deworming reduces anaemia: anaemia is associated with increased vitamin A deficiency.
- Worm infections and vitamin A deficiency both have serious health repercussions for a growing child and therefore both should be prioritized in endemic countries.

### ... and for logistic reasons:

- Worm infections and vitamin A deficiency are public health problems in the same geographical areas.
  - The target age groups for vitamin A distribution and deworming are very similar.
  - Training to administer deworming drugs is straightforward and can easily be integrated into the training for vitamin A distribution.
  - Adding deworming to vitamin A distribution does not disrupt the vitamin A distribution programme – in fact, it appears to increase the attendance since deworming is extremely popular with children and parents.
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## Aim of this manual

This manual is written for health planners and aims to promote the deworming of preschool children where vitamin A distribution campaigns are conducted.

**In this manual, *preschool children* are defined as all children older than 1 year who are not yet attending school.**

Attention is focused on this group because while school-age children (classified from the age of around 6 years onwards) are normally dewormed through school health programmes, preschool children are often not reached by deworming interventions.

In recognition of the constant demands made on health planners to prioritize health interventions, often with limited financial and human resources, this manual describes some of the advantages of combining two programmes which are often delivered separately: vitamin A distribution and deworming.

The manual is divided into three main sections that describe:

- the benefits of deworming preschool children;
- practical information about deworming drugs;

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