Diarrhea is a leading cause of child death in India. The average child experiences three episodes of diarrhea each year and in 2012, 140,000 children in India died from complications caused by diarrhea. Most of these deaths occurred in children under the age of two. Children in India are extremely vulnerable to diarrhea because unsafe water, poor sanitation and hygiene combine with malnutrition to create a vicious cycle of infection and nutrient depletion leaving severely malnourished children up to 9.5 times more likely to die from diarrhea. Further, children in India do not routinely receive the vaccine that protects against one of the leading causes of severe diarrhea - rotavirus - and more than 70 percent do not receive the recommended treatment for diarrhea - oral rehydration salts (ORS) and zinc.

Evidence shows the interventions with greatest impact on reducing child diarrhea deaths include:

1. **Vaccination**: The rotavirus vaccine is highly effective at preventing one of the leading causes of diarrhea. A recent study revealed an exceptionally high incidence of rotavirus diarrhea among children in India and rotavirus diarrhea is responsible for millions of outpatient visits and hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations each year. Making the rotavirus vaccine routinely available to children could reduce annual diarrhea deaths by more than 30 percent.

2. **Treatment**: Treating diarrhea with oral rehydration salts and zinc could reduce child diarrhea deaths by 90 percent and is one of the most cost-effective solutions available in child health. Frontline health workers should be trained and equipped to treat children with ORS and zinc and families should be aware of the importance of rehydration and zinc therapy during bouts of diarrhea. Families should have access to quality, affordable ORS and zinc products close to home at both public and private sector health outlets.

3. **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**: Improved water supply, sanitation and hand washing with soap can reduce episodes of diarrhea by 21, 37.5 and 35 percent respectively. Additional improvement of drinking water quality, such as point of use water disinfection, could lead to a reduction of diarrhea episodes of 45 percent.

4. **Nutrition**: Early and exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months and continued breastfeeding and good nutrition during episodes of diarrhea are critical. Vitamin A supplementation can reduce diarrhea-related mortality by 28 percent in children 6 months to 5 years.

**How Can a Corporation Help?**

- **Infrastructure, Product Development & Service Delivery**: ensure that quality, affordable products to prevent and treat diarrhea are manufactured and distributed to at-risk communities, especially rotavirus vaccines, ORS

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**Rotavirus Vaccines for India**

**Evidence and the Promise**

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**Forum Partners**

- CII
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- ICRW
- MDG Health Alliance
- United Nations Foundation

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- Johnson & Johnson
India's 7.5 million low birth weight babies are extremely vulnerable to diarrhea.

Unsafe water, poor sanitation and hygiene contribute to 88% of diarrheal deaths.

Diarrhea kills 140,000 children in India every year; one child every 4 minutes.