Every year since 2004, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with development partners, has conducted the Child Day Plus (CDP) initiative, as a strategy to speed up and reach more children in every corner of the country, in order to comply with the UNICEF, with the April ‘Child Days Plus’ strategy to speed up and reach more children in every corner of the country. 

This year the CDP will involve in addition to children aged 0-5 years, immunisation of children aged 1-14 years and the implementation of a community based deworming campaign. With the introduction of the Child Days Plus (CDP) programme, interventions happening in specific districts: 

**Involvement in specific districts:**

- Four screening for children aged between 0 and 5 years in 15 districts; Bundibugyo and Busia districts.
- A total of 8 districts of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) (excluding districts of Northern, Eastern, Western and Central regions).
- Child Days Plus 3: districts of Maale, Basalai, Bugando and Kasese and others selected by the health policy committee.

Child Days Plus – boosting immunisation & child survival

Child Days Plus is a package of life-saving Vitamin A for children under 5, an essential preventive and life-saving intervention critical in the case of children and the growth of the country. It is a way of safeguarding children’s health and well-being and ensuring that they receive the benefits of an early childhood education.

In Uganda, nearly 3,100 children under the age of 5 die every year due to Vitamin A deficiency. A survey conducted in the Uganda Demographic Health Survey of 2001 revealed that 40% of babies in the country aged between 0 and 11 months have low immunity and increased risk of suffering from vitamin A deficiency.

Lack of Vitamin A makes children more vulnerable to diseases such as measles and diarrhoea, and it is feared that up to 2% of the children die every year from these diseases. If this trend continues, it is difficult to stop the deaths of young children.

Nutritionists hope this initiative will help keep her baby healthy and nourished for life.

Providing life-saving Vitamin A for children under 5

Vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin found in many foods such as fruits and vegetables. It plays a crucial role in promoting healthy growth and development, boosting immunity and preventing blindness.

Nur and Nangabo are 6 month old twin sisters who were brought to one of the Health Centres in Moroto, in the Kaabong region, by their caring mum, Awa. To get their third dose of immunisation. The children were enrolled for immunisation soon after they were born.

From the very beginning, the health centre’s nurses sensitised Awa, the mother, about the importance of immunisation, and explained to her the possible consequences of not immunising them before turning one year old. Such consequences included poor mental and physical growth, as well as the risk of contracting fatal diseases that could cause children’s deaths.

Awa understood the fundamental importance of immunisation for Nur and Nangabo, and has subsequently allowed them to benefit from the Child Days Plus programme at the health centre, thereby preventing them from developing life-threatening diseases and keeping them healthy.

Nutritionists have warned that children who do not receive their vitamin A supplements are more likely to suffer malaria, diarrhea, malnutrition, and other infections. These problems can be reduced or even prevented by providing children with vitamin A supplements at regular intervals.

Awa was one of the first parents to benefit from the Child Days Plus programme, and she was glad to see the improvement in the health of her children. She said that vitamin A supplements have helped her children to grow and develop normally.

Child Days Plus - A Healthy Child, A Happy Family

The performance of the vaccine is a crucial factor in determining its success. The vitamin A supplement should be given to children who have missed their previous doses of the vaccine, as well as those who are at risk of developing vitamin A deficiency.

There are several benefits of vitamin A supplementation, including:

- Reducing the risk of childhood blindness.
- Improving the immune system and reducing the risk of infections.
- Promoting healthy growth and development.
- Reducing the risk of mortality from infections.

Child Days Plus - Preventing Malaria through Child Days Plus

The prevalence of malaria in Uganda is one of the highest in the world, with over 6 million children at risk every year.

If you walked into a health centre in any rural or hard-to-reach area where malaria is a problem, chances are that about 4 out of 10 children who are brought for immunisation may have malaria.

To prevent this, Child Days Plus includes robust interventions to reduce malaria transmission, including the use of insecticide-treated bed nets, good hygiene and sanitation practices, and the use of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets.

Insecticide-treated bed nets have been proven to be effective in reducing malaria transmission. The nets act as a barrier that prevents mosquitoes from biting the child while they sleep.

Insecticide-treated bed nets are widely available in markets and health facilities, and they are affordable for most families.

Health workers will be sensitised to promote the use of bed nets, and the community will be encouraged to use them regularly.

Moreover, a robust package of interventions, including the use of insecticide-treated bed nets, will be implemented to reduce malaria transmission.

With the introduction of the Child Days Plus Initiative, a national programme run by the Ministry of Health and the Uganda National Centre for Neglected Tropical Diseases and Dr. Stephen Maliga, a prominent malaria expert from Makerere University, will be launched.

The programme will focus on reducing malaria transmission and improving the health of children and communities affected by malaria.

The programme will also be supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and other international partners.

The programme will be implemented in collaboration with local community leaders and health workers, and will be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure its effectiveness.

The overall goal of the Child Days Plus Initiative is to reduce the burden of malaria in Uganda and improve the health of children and communities affected by the disease.

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