

MEXICO

An Opportunity to Improve the Health of Communities, Women, and Children in the Americas

PARTNERSHIP TO ELIMINATE TRACHOMA AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

Mexico continues efforts to maintain trachoma elimination

In the Americas, some 5.6 million people are at risk of trachoma in four countries (Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, and Peru).

In 2017, Mexico eliminated trachoma as a public health problem, becoming the first country in the Region of the Americas to achieve this goal.

To sustain its trachoma elimination status, the country needs to implement continuous surveillance for timely detection of any resurgence of the disease. It also needs to maintain prevention actions, such as promoting face and hand washing, improving access to safe water, and treating chronic forms of the disease.

What is ocular trachoma?

Ocular trachoma is an eye infection transmitted by direct contact with people infected with *Chlamydia trachomatis* bacteria.

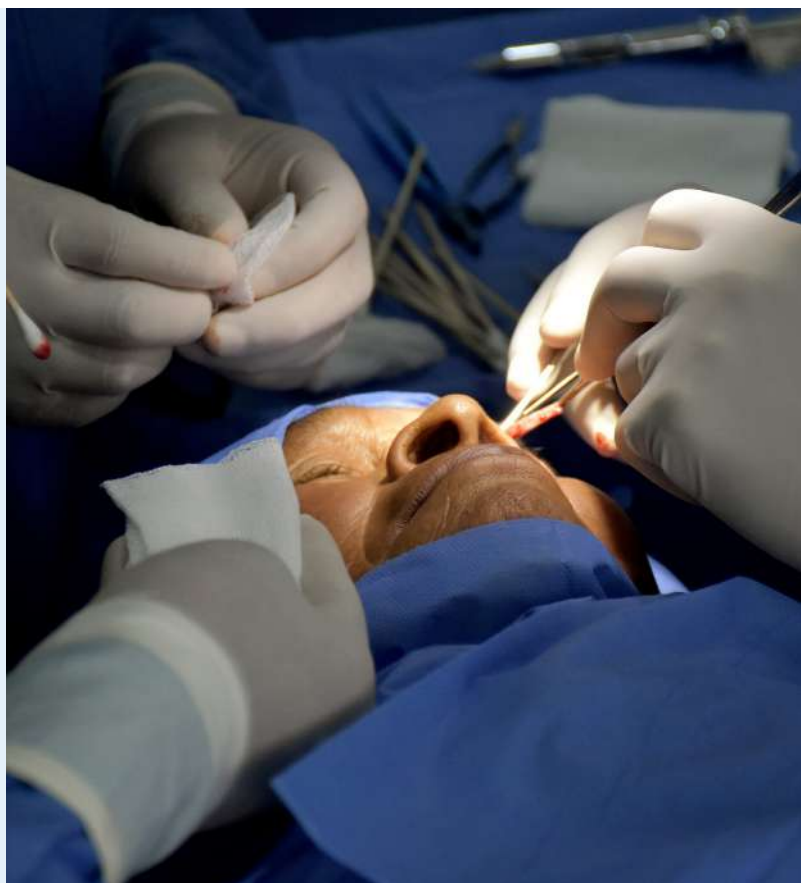


Recurrent infections in children living in communities with poor access to health services, water, and basic sanitation can lead to **chronic damage**, such as the eyelashes turning inwards. This causes pain and, if left untreated, can lead to visual impairment and blindness in adulthood.

How has the problem been addressed in Mexico?

The country has made the following progress:

- ▶ **Mexico is carrying out** post-elimination surveillance activities in the previously endemic district. Management of chronic forms of the disease continues, with surgeries scheduled for patients with eye damage.
- ▶ **Face and hand washing campaigns** continue in schools.
- ▶ **Efforts** are being made to strengthen the information system.



What actions will be taken in Mexico to step up efforts to eliminate trachoma?

Through the partnership and collaboration between the Health Institute of the State of Chiapas, the Government of Canada, and the Pan American Health Organization, the following actions will be taken over five years, starting in 2023:

- ▶ As part of post-elimination surveillance, active searches will continue for cases of trachomatous trichiasis (the chronic form of the disease) in communities in previously endemic municipalities. It is also necessary to update information on people who suffer from eye problems due to the disease and who require care.
- ▶ Continue treating chronic forms of the disease by scheduling surgeries for patients with eye damage; and continue designing and implementing a comprehensive eye health program that includes trachoma.
- ▶ Include gender and intercultural approaches in messages promoting disease management, in order to improve demand and access to treatment.
- ▶ Carry out surveillance activities, such as the trachoma prevalence survey, in coordination with visual health activities in the five previously endemic municipalities of Chiapas.

This initiative is aligned with PAHO's initiative for the elimination of communicable diseases and related conditions, **which aims to eliminate more than 30 diseases by 2030**, with a common, integrated, and sustainable approach, promoting linkages and synergies, within the health system and with other sectors.



What are the expected results of the partnership?

80% of patients identified with the chronic form of the disease will have received care.

The trachoma prevalence survey (integrated with visual health activities) will be completed in the five previously endemic municipalities of Chiapas (Chanal, Huixtan, Oxchuc, Tenejapa, and San Juan Cancuc), where about 190 000 people live and where it is necessary to rule out the recurrence of trachoma.

Mexico will maintain its trachoma elimination status with the World Health Organization.

National and subnational capacities will have been strengthened to provide health services with a gender and intercultural approaches.