

Family Planning Saves Lives

Region/ country	Number of maternal deaths	Lifetime risk of maternal death 1 in:
Sub-Saharan Africa	201,000	36
Southern Asia	66,000	210
These 2 regions account for 88% of maternal deaths worldwide		
Developed regions	1,700	4,900

Over 303,000 women per year die in pregnancy or childbirth
47,000 women per year die from complications of unsafe abortion
Complications of pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death in young women

104,000 maternal deaths/year could be prevented if all women who said they want to avoid pregnancy were able to stop childbearing

One of most important benefits of family planning is the potential to save lives. Each minute of every day, a woman dies from pregnancy or childbirth-related causes. The middle column of the table, shows the number of women who die each year in pregnancy or childbirth. Notice that most of the deaths occur in developing countries in Africa and Asia. The column on the right shows the lifetime risk of maternal death for each of these regions, which is the probability of dying from a pregnancy or childbirth-related cause during a woman's reproductive lifespan. It is influenced by both the risks associated with an average pregnancy, and the number of times the average woman gives birth.

Over 303,000 women per year die from pregnancy or childbirth. Nearly 47,000 women die each year due to the complications of unsafe abortion. Complications of pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death in young women aged between 15 and 19 years. Promoting policies and implementing programs that help young women delay their first pregnancy until the age of 18 can have a significant impact on girls' health, education, and life prospects.

If all women who want to avoid unintended pregnancy were to use modern contraceptives, there would be 22 million fewer unplanned births and 25 million fewer induced abortions; which in turn would result in 15 million fewer unsafe abortions, 390,000 fewer children that would lose their mothers, and 104,000 fewer maternal deaths. Unfortunately, the benefits from family planning are not available to many women countries around the world where the unmet need for family planning remains high.