

Recent news from WHO

- WHO joined the World Alliance for Breastfeeding action to celebrate **World Breastfeeding Week**, 1–7 August. Breastfeeding ranks among the most effective interventions for improving child survival and health, but less than 4 in 10 infants under the age of 6 months are exclusively breastfed. WHO has developed, together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a range of infant and young child-feeding counselling courses and job aids for use by health-care workers and lay counsellors.
- **Severe flooding in Moldova, Romania and Ukraine** since 23 July has caused the loss of 42 lives and the evacuation of 40 000 people, as of 1 August. WHO has been supporting the local ministries of health with investigations and technical assistance. As well as the immediate drowning-related deaths, the main health concerns include contamination of water by toxic chemicals and disruption of health infrastructures and supplies of water and food.
- An extra **US\$ 50m to help prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV** was announced at the global conference on HIV and AIDS in Mexico City by WHO, UNICEF and UNITAID on 31 July. The money will be targeted to the Central African Republic, China, Haiti, Lesotho, Myanmar, Nigeria, Swaziland, Uganda and Zimbabwe.
- Also in Mexico, new guidelines were announced on 4 August to help **stop the spread of TB among HIV positive drug users**, focusing on the use of antiretrovirals and isoniazid, which slow the development of AIDS and reduce the risk of TB, respectively. The guidelines are available at: http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596930_eng.pdf
- WHO has welcomed the announcement of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies to put US\$ 375 million into **the global fight against tobacco use**. This contribution will help countries with limited resources to reduce tobacco use through such measures as "quit smoking" programmes.
- **A new report on the progress of improving access to drinking water and sanitation** has been published by WHO and UNICEF's Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation. According to the report, 2.5 billion people suffer from a lack of access to adequate sanitation and nearly 1.2 billion practise open defecation, the riskiest sanitary practice of all. The report is available at: http://www.who.int/entity/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp2008.pdf

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