



The Facts: What Advocates Need to Know about the Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies

What Does Support for Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies (HTSP) mean?

- Education to women in developing nations about healthy birth timing (pregnant women are at lower risk when mother is between 18-34 years old)
- Education to women in developing nations about healthy birth spacing (2-3 years between children)
- Voluntary use of modern contraception
- Fertility awareness-based methods (sometimes known as natural family planning e.g., using the Standard Days Method with cycle beads)
- NOT abortion:
 - Hope Through Healing Hands does not fund abortion.
 - The Helms Amendment bars the use of U.S. government funds to pay for abortion services worldwide.

Women Lack Access to HTSP Education and Services

- [220+ million women worldwide](#) want access to HTSP education and services but don't have it.
- Less than [20% of women in Sub-Saharan Africa and barely a third of women in Asia](#) use modern contraception.

Women Have Limited Access to Maternal Health Care

- Every year, complications from pregnancy and childbirth claim the lives of nearly [287,000 women](#) and permanently disable many more, mostly in developing countries.
- [99%](#) of these deaths are in developing countries, and [80%](#) are preventable.
- For every maternal death, at least [30 other women](#) suffer serious illness or permanent debilitating injury.

- Young teenage girls (often married) are 10 to 14 times more likely to die of pregnancy-related causes than those between the ages of 18-34.¹
- Women with five or more children are 1.5 to three times more likely to die from pregnancy complications.²
- If 120 million women get access to HTSP resources, [200,000 fewer women and girls will die in childbirth](#) by 2020.

Newborns Suffer if Mothers Don't Have Access to HTSP Education and Services

- In developing countries, the [risk of prematurity and low birth rate doubles](#) when conception occurs within six months of a previous birth.
- Children born to women younger than 18 years have an excess mortality risk of about [40%](#) and are more likely to be stunted and anemic than children born to women over 18 years of age.

HTSP Combats Infant Mortality

- With the recommended two years spacing between birth and pregnancy, children are more than [twice as likely](#) to survive infancy.
- With recommended birth spacing, mothers can breastfeed their children longer and devote more time and attention to their infants.
- If 120 million women get access to HTSP resources, [3 million](#) fewer babies will die in their first year of life by the year 2020.

HTSP Gives Girls and Women the Chance to Be Educated

- Right now, up to [25% of girls in developing countries drop out of school](#) due to unintended pregnancy.
- Moms empowered to make decisions on the timing and spacing of their pregnancies are more able to pursue their education and better their families' lives.

HTSP Reduces Abortion Rates

- There are [80 million unplanned pregnancies](#) each year, and 42 million of those end in abortion.
- For women who seek abortion, [67,000 will die](#) because of abortion-related injuries and millions more suffer complications and long-term injuries.
- HTSP education and services in developing nations could result in more than [100 million](#) fewer unintended pregnancies and over [50 million](#) fewer abortions per year by the year 2020.

HTSP Is Cost Effective

- Studies show that every dollar spent on HTSP can save governments [up to six dollars](#) that can be spent on improving health, housing, water, and other public services.

¹ *Facts for Family Planning*. 2013. Washington, D.C.: USAID, pg. 10.

² Ibid.

Helpful Bible Verses

- Genesis 1:27-28
- Psalm 41:2
- Hosea 12:6
- Micah 6:8
- Matthew 22:37-40
- Galatians 6:2
- 3 John 1:2

Helpful Links

- [A Call to Christian Common Ground on Family Planning and Maternal and Children's Health](#), the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good
- [Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancy](#), World Vision