



Published on *Merck Newsroom Home* (<https://www.mrknewsroom.com>) on 11/1/18 7:50 pm EDT

Merck Reaffirms Commitment to Increase Vaccine Production and Clarifies Rotavirus Vaccine Transition Plan with Gavi Countries

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Published Date and Time:

11/6/18 6:00 pm EST

Vaccines are one of the greatest public health success stories in history. Merck has played an important part in that story, and our commitment to help prevent diseases continues.

In recent years, countries around the world have enacted new or expanded immunization programs which has created an unprecedented increase in global demand for vaccines, including many Merck vaccines. We are significantly ramping up our production capacity overall. In fact, to meet growing demand for Merck's medicines and vaccines and enable Merck to invest in R&D, Merck plans to invest \$16 billion in capital projects over the next five years. Merck is already supplying vaccines at our highest-ever annual production rate - 170 million doses, almost double the number since 2010.

Over the past decade, we have worked tirelessly and made numerous attempts to try and improve the overall product profile of our rotavirus vaccine to better meet the needs of underserved populations in Gavi countries. Specifically, we have been investing in new formulations that would have been potentially more thermostable and better suited to the unique conditions in Gavi countries. Despite our best efforts, we have not succeeded in making the necessary changes to the product profile.

Merck informed UNICEF and Gavi that while our unexpected supply constraints made it impossible to satisfy all our forecasted global commitments this year, we still plan to provide millions of doses to Gavi as it transitions to new suppliers. In fact, we will supply Gavi with almost 4 million doses of our rotavirus vaccine this year (more than twice the number of doses supplied to China in 2018) and even more doses in 2019 until newer low-cost vaccines are available.

Our goal is to enable at least a two-fold increase in the number of doses of Merck's vaccines distributed annually over the next five years. Merck has significantly increased our global supply of vaccines, reaching more people in more countries than ever before.

Our dedication to providing our vaccines to low-income countries remains strong as part of Merck's overarching commitment to help protect people against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Language:

English

Source URL: <https://www.mrknewsroom.com/news/company-statements/MerckReaffirmsCommitment%20to%20Increase%20Vaccine%20Production%20and%20ClarifiesRotavirusVaccineTransitionPla>