

“What an extraordinary achievement for a civilisation: to have developed the one diet that reliably makes its people sick!”

Michael Kevin Pollan, American author, journalist, activist, and professor of journalism at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism (1)

Introduction to the problem and scale

- Unhealthy diets are the largest global burden of disease and pose a greater risk to morbidity and mortality than does unsafe sex, and alcohol, drug, and tobacco use combined. (2)
- The prevalence of diet-related non-communicable diseases – including coronary heart disease, stroke, and diabetes – associated with high-calorie, unhealthy diets is increasing. (3)
- Non-communicable diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes are responsible for 71% of deaths globally each year. (4)
- The burden of non-communicable diseases is rising disproportionately among lower-income populations and countries, accompanying a “nutrition transition” toward diets that are higher in animal-based foods, added sweeteners, and refined carbohydrates. (5)
- Antimicrobial resistance is increasing, it is now a global crisis that threatens a century of progress in health and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. (6)
- Each year, approximately 700,000 people die from drug-resistant diseases, this could increase to 10 million per year as early as 2050 if no action is taken. (7)
- The cost of malnutrition is also an economic problem not only in terms of health care costs but also loss of productivity within the workplace with global estimates of \$3.5 trillion. (8)

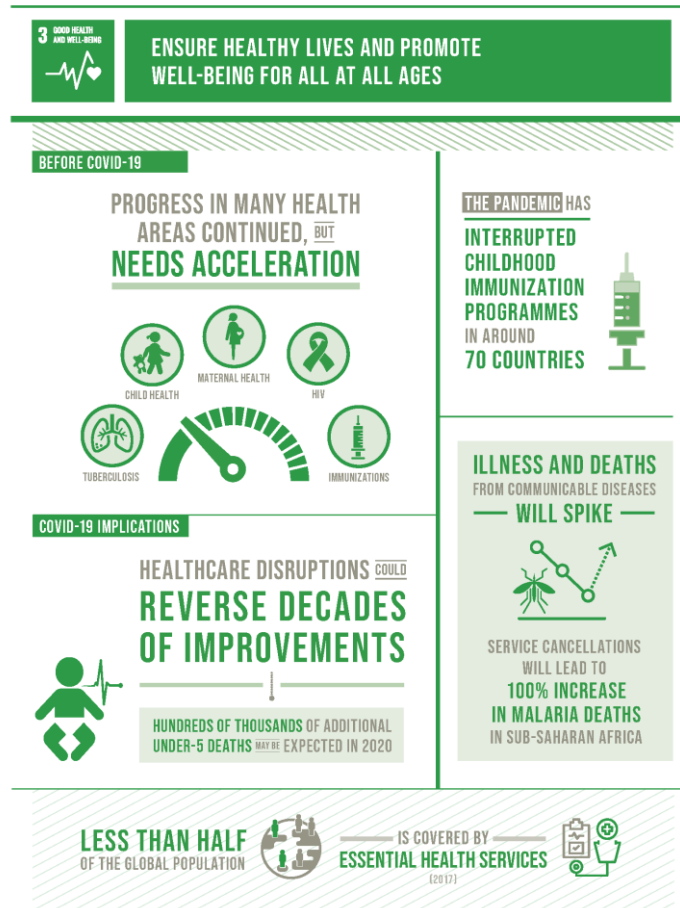
Link to intensive animal farming

- High consumption levels of red and processed meat --that has been made possible by industrial animal farming--contributes to heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and certain cancers. (9) (10), (11)
- Free-range animals, which consume fresh forage and have higher activity levels, often provide meat of higher nutritional quality than animals that are reared industrially. Pasture-fed beef has less fat and higher proportions of omega-3 fatty acids than grain-fed beef (12) The same applies to slower-growing chickens as compared with intensive fast-growing breeds and also to free range vs indoor production. (13)
- Routine application of antibiotics in feed and water used to prevent disease and enhance growth is a major contributor to antibiotic resistance. 73% of all antibiotics are used in farm animals, (14) and antibiotic use in animals is increasing worldwide. (15)
- Research shows that antibiotic use is lower in higher welfare systems for keeping pigs and chickens than it is in intensive production (16) In the Netherlands where around 40% of chicken production uses slower-growing breeds of chicken to meet the health and welfare requirements of their retailers, these slower growing breeds are consistently at least three times less likely to need antibiotic treatment than the fast growing breeds they keep for export. (17)
- Studies show that in some countries – including Denmark and the UK– agriculture is responsible for a larger proportion of the health problems arising from air pollution than

transport or energy generation (18) Air pollution is a serious problem for human health as it contributes to conditions such as bronchitis, asthma, lung cancer and congestive heart failure.

Link to the relevant SDG (s)

- **SDG 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. (19)



<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/>

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