

Pandemic preparedness

Climate change and habitat encroachment have led to increased human-wildlife interactions, contributing to rising infectious disease threats. At the same time, the misuse, underuse, and overuse of antibiotics have made antimicrobial resistance one of the top 10 public health threats according to the World Health Organization.

As outbreaks emerge, we must contain epidemics but also prevent their subsequent development into pandemics. The availability of appropriate therapeutic interventions is a key element of a robust, holistic approach to pandemic preparedness, together with surveillance, diagnostics and preventive medical and non-medical countermeasures.

Against this background, Novartis is determined to play a meaningful part in pandemic preparedness. This not only aligns with our commitment to innovation and access, but also underscores our ethical responsibility to contribute to global health security and to create a safer and more resilient world for all.

Our commitment

Our pandemic preparedness efforts focus on three areas:

Monitor: We continuously monitor and assess global health threats and the external landscape. This includes risk assessments of emerging and future outbreaks.

Prepare: We are currently involved in several R&D initiatives to respond to medical and societal needs from future pandemics or global health threats.

Respond: We want to ensure a swift response to future health emergencies and global health threats.

As part of our Pandemic Preparedness Program, we are participating in the following drug discovery and development activities:

- To help address the burden of neglected tropical diseases, our Biomedical Research organizational unit is discovering novel medicines to treat and, ultimately, contribute to the elimination of these diseases.
- Following an Antiviral Drug Discovery grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (a part of the National Institutes of Health) in May 2022, the University of Texas Medical Branch and Novartis Alliance for Pandemic Preparedness (UNAPP) are aiming to discover and develop orally available, safe, and effective drugs against coronaviruses, flavivirus and henipavirus, three major classes of viruses with pandemic potential.
- In May 2022, Novartis joined the INTREPID Alliance to accelerate progress in discovery and development of new antiviral treatments for future pandemics. This is in support of the 100 Days Mission which seeks to have 25 antiviral therapies for viral diseases with pandemic potential ready for clinical trials by 2026.

Further, Novartis partnered with a broad group of pharmaceutical stakeholders, including the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations and 23 of its member biopharmaceutical companies as investors to create the AMR Action Fund. This is the world's largest public-private partnership investing in antibiotics, antifungals, and other antimicrobial treatments.

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