



# India Eliminates Trachoma as a Public Health Problem

[Source: PIB](#)

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has officially recognized India for eliminating [Trachoma](#) as a public health issue.

- Trachoma is a contagious bacterial eye infection caused by *Chlamydia Trachomatis*, which can lead to **irreversible blindness if left untreated**.
  - It spreads through contact with the eyes, eyelids, nose, or throat secretions of infected individuals.
  - It is categorised as a [neglected tropical disease](#) and affects around **150 million people** globally, with **6 million** at risk of blindness.
- Trachoma was a leading cause of blindness in India during the **1950s-60s**. India launched the **National Trachoma Control Program** in **1963**, which was later integrated into the [National Program for Control of Blindness \(NPCB\)](#).
- In 1971, Trachoma caused **5% of blindness in India**, now reduced to less than 1% through the **National Programme for Control of Blindness & Visual Impairment (NPCBVI)** and the **WHO SAFE strategy**.
  - India was declared free from **infective Trachoma in 2017**, with ongoing surveillance from 2019 to 2024.
- The **National Trachomatous Trichiasis (TT only) Survey** was conducted in **200 endemic districts** from **2021-24** as part of WHO's mandate.
  - Reports compiled by the **NPCBVI team** were submitted to WHO for final verification, leading to the declaration that India has eliminated Trachoma as a public health problem.

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# S.A.F.E.

The World Health Organization leads an international alliance for the global elimination of trachoma, the Alliance for Global Elimination of Trachoma by the year 2020 (GET2020). The Alliance is guided by the WHO-endorsed SAFE strategy:

- Surgery** > To correct in-turned lashes
- Antibiotics** > Pfizer donated Zithromax® to treat active infection, using Azithromycin
- Facial Cleanliness** > To reduce disease transmission through face washing and hygiene practices
- Environmental Improvement** > To increase access to and use of clean water and sanitation

Read more: [Global Report on Neglected Tropical Diseases 2024](#)

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