

# What is health promotion?

**A:** Health promotion enables people to increase control over their own health. It covers a wide range of social and environmental interventions that are designed to benefit and protect individual people's health and quality of life by addressing and preventing the root causes of ill health, not just focusing on treatment and cure.

There are 3 key elements of health promotion:

## **1. Good governance for health**

Health promotion requires policy makers across all government departments to make health a central line of government policy. This means they must factor health implications into all the decisions they take, and prioritize policies that prevent people from becoming ill and protect them from injuries.

These policies must be supported by regulations that match private sector incentives with public health goals. For example, by aligning tax policies on unhealthy or harmful products such as alcohol, tobacco, and food products which are high in salt, sugars and fat with measures to boost trade in other areas. And through legislation that supports healthy urbanization by creating walkable cities, reducing air and water pollution, enforcing the wearing of seat belts and helmets.

## **2. Health literacy**

People need to acquire the knowledge, skills and information to make healthy choices, for example about the food they eat and healthcare services that they need. They need to have opportunities to make those choices. And they need to be assured of an environment in which people can demand further policy actions to further improve their health.

## **3. Healthy cities**

Cities have a key role to play in promoting good health. Strong leadership and commitment at the municipal level is essential to healthy urban planning and to build up preventive measures in communities and primary health care facilities. From healthy cities evolve healthy countries and, ultimately, a healthier world.