

THE POWER 4 NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

Malnutrition has many root causes including poverty, lack of education, erratic seasonal crop cycles, climate change, women's inequality, and poor access to water, sanitation, and hygiene. As the world works to tackle these major challenges, which will help end child malnutrition in the long-term, there are four essential actions we can take now to prevent children from dying of severe malnutrition. These interventions span the course of the critical 1,000-day period between a woman's pregnancy and a child's second birthday when there is a unique window of opportunity to build healthier and more prosperous futures for mothers and their babies.

Supply all pregnant women with prenatal vitamins



Despite the proven benefits of supplying pregnant women with a full dosage of multiple-micronutrient supplements (MMS), the majority of women do not have access to these critical supplements. MMS increases the chances a baby will be born at a healthy weight and survive to his or her second birthday.

Support breastfeeding mothers



Babies get the best start at life when they drink nothing but breastmilk until they are 6 months old, and continue breastfeeding until they are 2 years old while also consuming other nutritious complementary foods. Even though breastfeeding is the best way to protect newborns from malnutrition, infections, and disease, only 41% of babies around the world are exclusively breastfed. Many mothers who would like to breastfeed cannot access the support and information they need to be successful. One-to-one and group breastfeeding counselling helps provide mothers with the support they need to reach their breastfeeding goals.

Continue large-scale Vitamin A Supplementation



Supplying a child with two high doses of Vitamin A every year is one of the most cost-effective ways to protect children from blindness, diarrhea, and other fatal illnesses. Until recently, Vitamin A supplementation was routine and easily accessible because it had been paired with national polio vaccination efforts. However, now that polio has been mostly eradicated, these vaccination campaigns are being phased out. After years of increasing, the number of children who have access to Vitamin A coverage has started to drop alarmingly. Transitioning national Vitamin A supplementation efforts to a sustainable delivery platform is essential to ensuring children continue to receive this critical preventive regimen.

Expand coverage of specialized foods for treatment



The first priority of any nutrition program should be to make wasting treatment unnecessary by preventing children from ever becoming wasted. Unfortunately, millions of children every year still require wasting treatment. Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) is an energy-dense, life-saving product that gives wasted children the nutrients they need to survive. Yet we are reaching less than a quarter of even the most severely malnourished children. Expanding coverage of services will help ensure no child dies because they don't have access to the fundamental treatment they need to stay alive.