



30th April, 2020

SOUTH SUDAN COVID-19 & NUTRITION - ADVOCACY MESSAGING

- The world is rightly focused on the containment of COVID-19. This demands urgent attention in connection with actions on other long-term and large-scale health threats.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has yet to reach some parts of the world at the scale we are seeing in USA, Europe, Asia and parts of Africa.
- A combination of Malnutrition, poor access to healthcare, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and overcrowded living conditions could make the COVID 19 outbreak even more serious for the poorest communities.
- People of all ages can be infected by COVID-19 , Older people and people with chronic medical conditions ¹appear to be more at risk of developing severe symptoms.
- The COVID-19 response should take into consideration that malnutrition may cause additional vulnerability. A severely undernourished child is nine times more likely to die from common infections than a well-nourished child², while good nutrition boosts immunity and helps bodies to fight disease and infections.
- Though there are some unknowns about the COVID 19, still actions on nutrition should continue because it is vital to fight against COVID-19 as well as other causes of morbidity and mortality.
- As part of COVID-19 response, all stakeholders should prioritise actions to ensure children, pregnant and lactating women, people with chronic diseases and older people are well nourished alongside with other health interventions. These actions should be part of preparedness and prevention strategies, and management of malnutrition should be part of national treatment guidelines.
- All Stake holders at national, state, and county level should continue to scale-up investments and save lives through interventions including:
 - Investment in Health and Nutrition systems, with well-equipped and supported health workers at their core for protecting the most vulnerable
 - Community sensitisation and mass public information campaigns to help adults and children know how to reduce their exposure to infection
 - Access to appropriate safe healthy and nutritious food
 - Promotion, protection and support for early initiation, exclusive breastfeeding, continued breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices in the community and health facilities
 - Social safety nets for vulnerable groups to help protect from financial impacts
 - Strengthen Immunisation programme to protect people against the spread of many other infectious diseases and connect people to the health system
 - Access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation
 - Give psychosocial support to community during and after the pandemic



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¹ Cancer, Chronic Heart Diseases, Hypertension, Diabetes HIV/AIDS, TB

²UNICEF. Severe acute malnutrition. https://www.unicef.org/nutrition/index_sam.html, last access 29 October 2019.