

NIGERIA FOOD AND NUTRITION RESPONSE PLAN FOR COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Federal Ministry of Health

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought social and economic crisis that is rapidly exacerbating an ongoing nutrition insecurity in Nigeria.

To contain the spread of the pandemic in Nigeria, the government has put in place a number of measures, one of which is the lockdown in the three states of Lagos, Ogun, FCT and lately Kano, which have high COVID-19 confirmed cases. Similarly, several other states have adopted measures, such as movement restriction, in order to curb the spread of the pandemic.

The lockdown triggered by COVID-19 have led to disruption in health, nutrition, food aid, school feeding, safety net/social protection and Early Childhood Development services with high impacts on the vulnerable groups. The lockdown has also resulted in limited access to food and its supply chains leading to restriction in the availability of and people's access to sufficient/diverse and nutritious food and supplements provided through the health care facilities. Malnutrition and other co-morbidities (for example HIV, tuberculosis) are considered a risk factor for complications in people with COVID-19, due to a compromised immune system.

Like many other African countries, there was concern of nutrition situation in Nigeria before the COVID' 19 pandemic. Stunting and wasting rates were 37% and 7% respectively. Deficiencies in key micronutrients were also widely affecting the Nigerian population, mainly children and women with only 34.5% children 6-23 months old meeting the minimum dietary diversity needed to ensure adequate intake of micronutrients such as vitamin A, iron, zinc and iodine. Equally, less than half of children in Nigeria eat iron rich/fortified foods. There is concern that the prevalence of child stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies is expected to increase in the coming months due to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, with attendant limited access to adequate, diverse and nutritious foods. To tackle these impacts on the nutritional wellbeing of vulnerable population, the Federal Ministry of Health in collaboration with Nutrition Stakeholders has developed a CoVID-19 Pandemic Response plan.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

The overall objective of the Plan is to ensure the integration of nutrition into the National COVID -19 response plan because of the central importance of good nutrition in supporting immune function and preventing a worsening of the nutrition situation of the vulnerable populations in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Offer strategies to ensure the continuity of critical nutrition interventions to vulnerable populations during the pandemic,
2. Outline priority interventions to ensure good nutrition during COVID-19 pandemic situation.
3. Propose mitigation measures to limit the impact of COVID 19 on the nutritional status of the vulnerable groups
4. Mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food system.
5. Develop guidance for actions for ensuring safe, resilient markets and food supply chains;
6. Develop a Food and Nutrition Communication Framework/plan.

NATIONAL COVID-19 FOOD SYSTEM AND NUTRITION RESPONSE

Strategic Priority	Objective	Interventions/ Activities	Immediate Mitigation or Actions				Medium/ Long Term Mitigation/ Action			
			Timeline	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Person Responsible	Timeline	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Person Responsible
Development of a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Nutrition for Consideration in COVID-19 Responses	<i>Ensure nutrition is a key aspect considered in the National COVID-19 Multi-Sectoral Pandemic Response Plan.</i>	Develop a multi-sectoral essential nutrition actions list for inclusion into the National COVID-19 Multi-Sectoral Pandemic Response Plan	22-27 April 2020							
		Make a series of presentation (or submission) on the essential food & nutrition actions to the Presidential Taskforce (PTF)	27-28 April 2020			FMOH/FBNP / FMA&RD				FMOH/FBNP /FMA&RD
		Make Presentation/ Submission on the Essential Nutrition Actions (ENAs) at the geopolitical zones/ State levels to policy makers	4-5 May 2020			FMOH/FBNP / FMA&RD				
		Ensure that State Nutrition Officers (SNOs) are members of the States Task force/coordination platform for COVID-19 to ensure issues around nutrition is covered	Ongoing/ Continuous			FMOH/ SMOH				FMOH/SMOH
		Monitoring & Enforcement of continued compliance to the National Regulation on the Marketing of	Ongoing/ Continuous			NAFDAC/ FMOH	Ongoing/ Continuous			NAFDAC/ FMOH

		Breastmilk Substitutes/ the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and minimize risks of artificial feeding on optimal Breastfeeding practices								
Support Health System Capacity to Deliver	<i>Contribute to strengthening health systems to respond to COVID-19, while maintaining the delivery of essential nutrition actions/ services.</i>	Procurement of adequate nutrition supplies for health facilities ((RUTF, MUAC tapes for Family MUAC approach to screen; MNP linked with IYCF ; other , Therapeutic products & Routine medicines; IFA)	May-20			FMOH				FMOH
		Provision of MUAC tape to caregivers to screen their children at home, as well as detailed information of where to seek services in the event that their children are under-nourished	15-20 May 2020			FMOH	Ongoing/ Continuous			FMOH

		Provision and distribution of essential nutrition commodities (RUTF, MNP, VAS, IFA, Zinc + LO-ORS) to vulnerable communities and health centres							
		Facilitate the provision of PPE to health workers to continue with CMAM and MNDC (MNP, VAS, Zinc + LO-ORS) services at their health centers	28-30 April 2020			FMOH	Ongoing/Continuous		FMOH
		Development/ adaptation and operationalization of global guidelines on nutrition for COVID-19 (IYFC for children that are on breastmilk & complementary foods; MNDC including VAS and fortification; management of SAM).	28-30 April 2020			FMOH/NCDC			
		Integrate Nutrition key messages within the risk communication and training materials of the COVID-19 Response	28 - 30 April			FMOH NCDC			

		Conduct training for health workers and community nutrition workers on how to protect themselves in COVID-19	15-30 May 2020			FMOH NCDC				
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Protection of Food and Nutrition Security and Local Food Systems	<i>Contribute to mitigation efforts that address the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition</i>	Participate in the identification and definition of vulnerable populations and map and prioritize food and nutrition location in greatest needs and vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity.	27-30 April 2020							
		Conduct Assessment on the impact or risks of COVID-19 to food and nutrition security at all levels, utilizing existing modeling approaches already adapted to COVID-19 scenarios.					June-December 2020			
		Provision of inputs (seeds, credits, etc.) to households with cash-based interventions for homestead gardening of vegetable /livestock farming.	April-May 2020			FMA&RD				

		Develop/ adapt a minimum package of food groups that Government and Partners can use for palliatives.	Ongoing/ Continuous			FMA&RD				
		Ensure that households identified for cash-transfer must include households with pre-school (0-5 years) and primary school children	Ongoing/ Continuous			FMA&RD				
		Support the continuation of food assistance and social protection measures including school feeding programs and increased household vulnerabilities beyond COVID-19.	Ongoing/ Continuous			Fed. Min of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development				
	Ensuring continuity of supply chains in the face of a pandemic	Ensure continuous supply of agricultural inputs. Unblock logistics bottle necks to ensure free flow of products and agricultural inputs such as seedlings and fertilizers, to				Government				

		and from the farm to the markets.								
		Increased food safety throughout the Agricultural value-chain Training and communication of safety measures to be implemented on the farms to ensure social distancing, sanitation and hygiene practices are sustained.				Private Sector				
		Engage and incentivize private sector to increase food processing cut post-harvest losses and wastage to increase access to safe and nutritious foods Ensure continuous flow of fortificants and premixes imported into the country Assess and ensure the availability of fortified product in market stalls/supermarket shelves								
		Promote the use of face masks and appropriate								

		protective kits by food system actors and ensure key points of contacts within the food value chain is safe and hygienic								
	Ensuring awareness of and access to safe nutritious foods	Develop guidance to inform actions for safe, resilient markets and food supply chains and for short term emergency response. Promote home gardens in rural and urban areas for the production of fresh fruits and vegetables including bio-fortified foods using broken buckets, used tires, etc.				Government				
		Put in place social protection measures. Provide conditional cash transfers. Support distribution of nutritious food baskets which promote healthy, diverse diets. Ensure food safety and hygiene measures are put in place in areas where food baskets				Private Sector Development Partners				

		<p>are packed and distributed.</p> <p>Support gender equality, female empowerment and youth engagement in the food system</p> <p>Use mass media to educate the public on the importance of healthy diets with recipes from locally available cooking inputs.</p>								
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Food and Nutrition Communication Framework/plan

This section outlines the communication requirements for the COVID-19 pandemic nutrition response and how information will be provided. The Plan defines what information will be communicated, how the information will be communicated, who the information is directed at, how the information will be communicated, and how the impact will be assessed. The objectives of this plan are to:

1. Increase commitment of the Presidential Task Force on the support for nutrition response for Covid-19 pandemic Period
2. Increase food and nutrition awareness among the State Governors on the need for continuous engagement with citizens
3. Increase the number of State Governors who support smallholder farmers to access their farms, access the markets to sell their produce in order to earn income to acquire enough food for their families
4. Increase number of State Governors who support access to input and services to enable farmers to engage in farming activities during this farming season while maintaining all necessary prevention measures.
5. Increase awareness of the general population on the importance of nutritionally diverse diet in the Covid-19 pandemic period
6. Promote inclusion of animal source proteins (such as dried fish and dried meats), fruits and vegetables in food distribution to vulnerable groups
7. Reduce myths and misconceptions among the population on foods that can prevent with Covid-19
8. Promote appropriate Maternal Infant and Young Child Feeding (M&IYCF) practices in period during Covid-19 and post Covid-19 pandemic

Priority Audience ¹	Problem/Current Behaviors	Desired Behavior	Barriers to Change Behavior	Activities/Communications levels, channels and SBCC/IEC materials			Budget/Cost	M&E Indicators	Key implementer
				Key Messages	Doable Actions	Preferred Media/Other			
COVID-19 Presidential Task Force	Less attention is paid to core nutrition interventions in the activities of the Task Force	Support the provision of adequate diet in the palliatives	Inadequate knowledge on the benefits of nutrition	Adequate nutrition is key to building immunity, treatment, and recovery	Include the Importance of nutrition in the treatment protocol	Communicate			Nutrition Task Team
State Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not communicating effectively with the citizens Not supporting the vulnerable Food security Policy deficit No COVID 19 LGA/Community level response team School feeding scheme suspended 	<p>Increase knowledge on COVID-19.</p> <p>Increase knowledge on the benefits of adequate nutrition</p> <p>Communicate routinely/regularly.</p> <p>Govt to ensure community distribution of raw basic food to entitled children at home/known collection center</p>	<p>Low risk perception.</p> <p>Knowledge gaps.</p> <p>Lack of trust among citizens.</p> <p>Poor/No COVID-19 risk communications</p> <p>Credible and equitable distribution of food items</p> <p>Community acceptable criteria for distribution</p>	<p>Talk to your people about the COVID-19.</p> <p>Respond timely to rumors.</p> <p>Provide Nutrition support to the vulnerable.</p> <p>Encourage continued breastfeeding support smallholder farmers to access their farms, access</p>	<p>Provide support to the vulnerable</p> <p>Establish COVID-19 response team at LGA level</p> <p>Monitor and provide routine updates</p> <p>Work with security agents to facilitate access to farms and markets for smallholder farmers</p>	<p>Electronic Factsheet through Governor's Forum/State level COVID-19 Taskforce, Tweeter handles, Facebook</p>		<p>Number of Governors who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate routinely, 2. Who provide support to the vulnerable 3. Number of LGA/Community response teams created 4. Number of nutrition related Policies made 	FMOH and partners

¹ State demographic & Psychographic Characteristics/ Knowledge, Attitudes & Perceptions

				markets to sell their produce					
Traditional Media	Inconsistent COVID 19 information being disseminated	Increase knowledge on the benefits of adequate nutrition Disseminate accurate information on the benefits of nutrition in the context of coronavirus infection	Knowledge gaps Business/profit considerations Drive for 'Breaking News'	Adequate nutrition is essential to building immunity, supporting treatment and recovery during the COVID-19	Disseminate information on the benefits of nutrition related interventions in the context of COVID-19	Briefs on Nutrition in the context of Corona virus. On-line interviews with partners/nutrition experts. Partners websites		Number of news reports on nutrition in the context of the corona virus pandemic. Number of informed COVID-19 nutrition messages disseminated	FMOH and partners
Social Media	Circulation of sensational/fake news.	Increase knowledge on the benefits of adequate nutrition Disseminate accurate information on the benefits of nutrition in the context of coronavirus infection	Drive to increase followership Business/profit considerations	Adequate nutrition is essential to building immunity, supporting treatment and recovery during the coronavirus	Disseminate information on the benefits of nutrition related interventions in the context of COVID-19. Produce and disseminate videos/on-line posters, photos etc on Nutrition in the context of the coronavirus.	Twitter chats/Zoom meetings on Nutrition in the context of the pandemic. Briefs targeted at key influencers and key audiences disseminated online. Videos shared online/online resources		Number of factual videos in circulation. No of factual information on nutrition in the context of the coronavirus shared on twitter/Facebook and Instagram.	FMOH and partners

						from partners websites.			
Healthcare workers	Adequate and healthy nutrition is not considered part of treatment/factors that aid recovery	Increased knowledge on importance of adequate nutrition in treatment and recovery Provision of appropriate diets for patients in isolation centers	Access and Availability of food items Funding for adequate nutrition in isolation centers	Adequate nutrition is an essential part of immunity, treatment and recovery from Covid-19	Include animal source protein, fruits and vegetables in meals served to Covid-19 patients in isolation centers Encourage convalescents to include more fruits and vegetables in their diets/meals	Professional associations such as NMA, NMCN, JOHESU (?) etc. Social media Radio/PSA		Proportion of health workers with knowledge on the role of adequate and healthy nutrition in management and recovery from Covid-19 Proportion of isolation centers providing adequate and health nutrition to patients Proportion facilities promoting healthy nutrition	FMOH and partners
Faith based Leaders	Promote misconceptions on foods items that can prevent or cure covid-19	Provide accurate nutrition related information to their followers Promote appropriate practices to reduce the spread of Covid-19	Knowledge gap on the cause of Covid-19 Lack of trust in available sources of information Lack of access to credible	Appropriate and healthy nutrition can boost immunity to help the body fight infections including corona virus Handwashing and social distancing	Provide information on the benefits of appropriate healthy nutrition to followers through sermons and communication with followers Include call-to-action on	Faith-leadership groups (CAN, JNI, MURIC, PFN) Social media Radio/PSA		Numbers of faith-based leaders providing appropriate information benefits of appropriate nutrition in preventing infection	FMOH and partners

		Promote accurate information symptoms, testing and management of Covid-19	source of information Conspiracy theories	can reduce the spread of Covid-19	hand washing and social distancing during sermons and communication with their followers Encourage adherents to seek appropriate medical treatment/management of Covid-19				
Traditional/Community Leaders	Lack of belief in the existence of Covid-19 Promote misconceptions on foods items that can prevent or cure covid-19	Provide accurate nutrition related information to misinformation. Promote appropriate practices to reduce the spread of Covid-19 Promote accurate information symptoms, testing and management of Covid-19	Knowledge gap on the cause of Covid-19 Lack of trust in available sources of information Lack of access to credible source of information Conspiracy theories	Appropriate and healthy nutrition can boost immunity to help the body fight infections including corona virus Handwashing and social distancing can reduce the spread of Covid-19	Provide accurate information on cause of covid-19 and its symptoms through community-based channels of communication (such as town announcers) within their communities Include call-to-action on hand washing and social distancing in messaging in the communities through community-	Traditional leader councils Social media Radio/PSA			FMOH and partners

					<p>based channels</p> <p>Encourage community members to seek appropriate medical treatment/management of Covid-19</p> <p>Promote self-isolation of community members who travelled outside of the community</p> <p>Provide hand washing stations with soap/ash in strategic places in the community</p>				
Pregnant women	Low attention paid to adequate nutrition of pregnant women	Increase knowledge on adequate healthy diet for pregnant women	<p>Lack of knowledge on what are good nutrient intakes during pregnancy.</p> <p>Poor access to antenatal care services</p>	Healthy diets during pregnancy boosts immunity on COVID 19 infection for mother and baby	<p>Eat adequate diet rich in fruits and vegetables.</p> <p>Visit the nearest PHC for antenatal care services as at and when due.</p> <p>Continue consumption of iron-folic acid as prescribed by PHC</p> <p>Government has put measures in</p>	<p>Radio</p> <p>TV</p> <p>Health Facility</p> <p>Social media</p>		<p>Number of Radios communicating on adequate diet for women</p> <p>Number of pregnant women reached with messages on nutrition.</p> <p>Number of women who attended antenatal care</p>	FMOH and partners

					place to ensure your safety			that receives nutrition education.	
Lactating mothers	Inadequate dietary intake	Increase knowledge on adequate dietary intake for lactating mothers.	Inadequate information on nutrition for lactating mothers Poor access to postnatal care services	Eat variety of foods with plenty fruits and vegetables to improve you and your child immunity to prevent COVID 19 infection	Ensure you eat healthy diet to provide the nutrients needed for you and your breastfed child Visit the nearest PHC or hospital with your child for postnatal care Government has put measures in place for your safety	Radio TV Health Facility Social media		Number of radio stations providing information on adequate diet for lactating mothers Number of lactating mothers reached with nutrition messages Number of women who attended postnatal care that receives nutrition education.	Not taking nutritionally adequate foods.
	Beliefs that Breastmilk is contaminated by corona virus & preference of BMS	Increase Knowledge that Breastmilk is full of antibodies to promote immunity of the child	Lack of knowledge that Breastmilk has same anti-infective factors that fight against corona virus and other germs	Mothers with symptoms of COVID 19 should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Mask when breastfeeding • Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after contact with the baby. • Clean and disinfect any 	Continue to breastfeed while maintaining Safe hygiene and respiratory practices during Covid-19 infection Seek support of breastfeeding experts for any breastfeeding difficulty				Number of media houses providing information on breastfeeding with Covid-19 infection Number of Mothers/ Caregivers accessing Breastfeeding support from the Health system

				surfaces you touch. Anti-infective factors in Breastmilk fight corona virus like other germs	Ensure you child received six monthly Vitamin A supplementation for children from six to fifty-nine months old to				
All Population	Inadequate dietary Intake	Increased knowledge on importance of adequate nutrition to immunity treatment and recovery Provision of nutritionally adequate, and diverse diets for all patients in isolation centers	Knowledge gap on the benefits of adequate nutrition to Covid-19 Non availability of credible information on consumption of adequate diet for all age groups during the Covid-19 pandemic	Healthy nutritional practices can boost immunity to help the body fight infections including corona virus Handwashing and social distancing can reduce the spread of Covid-19	Take nutritious food during the pandemic, including fortified foods (flour, salt, etc) Visit the nearest PHC for further support; government has put measures in place to ensure your safety Seek the guidance of NAFDAC if you want to donate BMS as palliative measure	Radio TV Social media Health Facility Town criers		Number of media houses communicating on adequate diet for all populations Number of people reached with nutrition messages disaggregated by age Number of people reached with palliative measures disaggregated by age and sex Number of Stakeholders contacting NAFDAC on BMS donation as Palliatives	

S/N	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4
	I. Develop strategies to ensure the continuity of critical nutrition intervention during the pandemic. II. Determine what interventions to prioritize during COVID-19 pandemic situation.	I. Develop a Food and Nutrition Communication Framework/plan. II. To ensure the integration of nutrition into National COVID-19 Response Plan.	I. Assess the impact of pandemic on nutrition.	i. Develop guidance to inform actions for safe, resilient markets and food supply chains, and for short term emergency response actions
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