

New Challenges and Opportunities for Ensuring Access to Nutrition

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NUTRITION · HEALTH · SUSTAINABLE LIVING



The COVID-19 pandemic deepens the malnutrition crisis

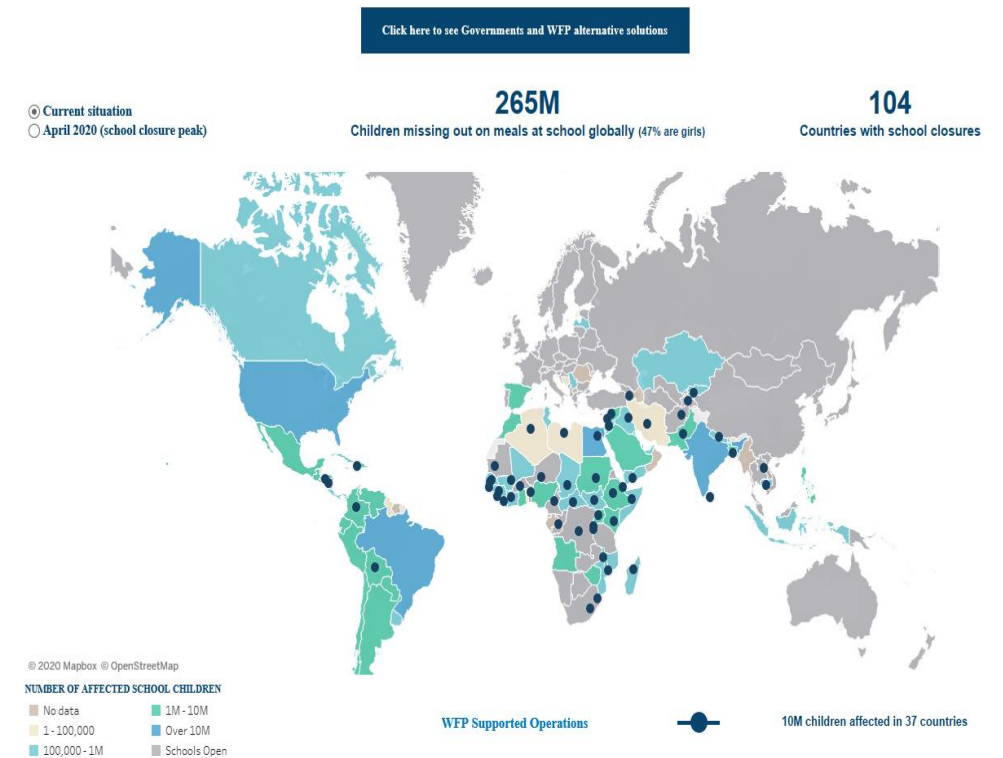
Lockdown situations disrupted :

- Food supply
- Household incomes
- Access to critical services for health, nutrition and education
- Social Safety net programs delivery
- Calories and **micronutrients intake**

Pandemic will increase the risk of all forms of malnutrition:

- Rise in Stunting and Wasting
- Significant increase in Low Birth Weight
- Micronutrient deficiencies will increase and affect mainly women and children
- Poor nutrition in First 1000 days is likely to lead to a **COVID generation** of children

Global Monitoring of School Meals During COVID-19 School Closures



World Food Programme: <https://cdn.wfp.org/2020/school-feeding-map/>

UK doctors demand free meals for kids as COVID fuels hunger

By DANICA KIRKA yesterday

The Pandemic Tears a Hole in a Vital Child Nutrition Safety Net

● Online learning means fewer students are getting free and discounted school meals.

COVID-19 forces cuts to school meal programs across Canada

14 days ago | News | 2/14



Staple Food Fortification is a powerful practice to address micronutrient deficiencies across the population

Reduces critical micronutrient deficiencies	Population-wide reach	No change in dietary habits needed	Proven to be effective	Excellent return on investment	Cost-effective
					
Vitamins A, D, B1, B2, B6 & B12, niacin, folic acid, iron, zinc, iodine etc.	From children to the elderly, anyone consuming staples will be reached, ensuring maximum impact.	Foods that are fortified are already commonly consumed, e.g. wheat, maize, rice, cooking oil, sugar & salt.	The evidence proves staple food fortification can address serious health concerns and boost human health and productivity.	Eliminating deficiencies creates healthy, productive populations, and proves to provide one of the highest social ROIs.	Extremely affordable and inexpensive, yet strong impact and proven returns.

Effective fortification is affordable - ineffective fortification is expensive

Micronutrient fortification: support in health & immunity

Helps prevent neural tube defects, healthy red blood and **immune** cells

Folic acid

B9

To develop healthy red blood cells, eyesight, skin, gut, lung and **immune** cells

Vit A

A

healthy DNA, blood and **immune** cells, nervous system development

Vit B12

B12

Helps absorb iron, healthy bones, teeth, gums and **immune** system

Vit C

C

Healthy birth weight, bones, blood pressure, healthy **immune response**

Vit D

D

Antioxidant protecting cells helping to maintain healthy eyes, skin and **immune** cells

Vit E

E

Develop strong bones and teeth, healthy blood pressure, and **immune** cells

Calcium

Ca

Essential for red blood, nervous system development and **immune** cells

Iron

Fe

For organ formation, nervous system development and **immune** response

Zinc

Zn

- Micronutrients play a role in many functions including **immunity**
- **Food fortification** can improve dietary quality, fill population nutrient gaps, and deliver health benefits to the population at large
- ⁴ Food fortification offers a **cost-effective opportunity** to deliver immune micronutrients that strengthen our collective ability to fight and recover from infections

Recommendations for nutrition in the context of COVID-19: resilience of populations

<p>FAO</p> <p>Importance of good nutrition before, during and after an infection</p> <p>While no foods or dietary supplements can prevent COVID-19 infection, maintaining a nutritious diet is important to supporting a healthy immune system to fight infections. Infections can deprive the body's nutrient stores so that the body needs extra nutrients during recovery. Therefore, a nutritious diet is critical throughout and post-COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>WHO Europe</p> <p>Nutrition is crucial to fight infections</p> <p>Good nutrition is crucial for health, particularly in times when the immune system might need to fight back. Limited access to fresh foods may compromise opportunities to continue eating a healthy and varied diet.</p>	<p>WHO</p> <p>Micronutrients, critical for a well-functioning immune system</p> <p>Micronutrients such as Vits D and C and zinc, are critical for a well-functioning immune system and play a vital role in promoting health and nutritional well-being. There is currently no guidance on the use of micronutrient supplements as a treatment of COVID-19.</p>	<p>UN</p> <p>Call to actions to protect children's right to nutritious, safe, affordable nutrition in the COVID-19 pandemics</p> <p>UN agencies published an urgent call to actions to protect children's right to nutritious, safe, affordable nutrition in the COVID-19 pandemic. ¹ The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to increase all forms of child malnutrition, including wasting, stunting, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight.</p>	<p>FFI, GAIN, HKI, IGN, NI, SUN, UNICEF and WFP</p> <p>Call to strengthen large-scale food fortification during COVID-19</p> <p>broaden fortification's reach even further, to improve dietary quality and strengthen our collective ability to fight and recover from a global pandemic.</p>
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Protecting School Children's Nutrition (*India example*)

- **Food fortification was given a high priority:**
 - Changes brought to the existing ration (PDS) allocation to tackle food insecurity*
 - Edible oil and milk fortification to become mandatory nationwide
 - Ministry of Food looking at expanding fortified rice distribution in Public Distribution System (PDS)
 - Cross-sectors collaborations to ensure fortification supply chain is still functioning
- **Targeted fortification**
 - Take Home Ration – reach is high and targeted to the most vulnerable. Taken up as high priority by policy makers
 - Fortification for School Feeding program – many successful initiatives and the government is scaling up and initiating processes to have only fortified meals
- Many **private sector initiatives** to improve micronutrient intake



Schools Meals should not only Feed but Nourish Children

“Malnutrition could exacerbate the effects of COVID-19 in mothers and children ... access to nutritious, safe and affordable diets needs to be safeguarded and promoted as a cornerstone of the response to COVID-19.”

Fore, Dongyu, Beasley, Ghebreyesus. “Child malnutrition and COVID-19: the time to act is now.” *The Lancet*, vol 396. August 22, 2020.

