



# THE POWER 4 NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

Currently, a pregnant woman or newborn dies every 7 seconds. In a year's time, those deaths total more than 4.5 million women and babies. Even more shocking is that these deaths are largely preventable. But progress on maternal and child survival has stagnated since 2015, caused by a combination of inadequate investment, pandemic-induced disruptions to health systems, growing global conflicts, and worsening climate disasters.

Nearly half of deaths among children under age 5 are attributable to malnutrition, and more than 30 million children currently suffer from acute malnutrition. Among those who survive, poor nutrition in the critical first 1,000 days of a child's life causes long-term consequences, damaging both the body and brain. This negatively impacts cognitive development and impedes future school and work success.

But proven solutions exist. By prioritizing four key nutrition actions, we can support the long-term physical and cognitive development of the world's most vulnerable women and children. Called the Power 4, these low-cost, high-impact solutions have been proven to reduce child mortality due to malnutrition, giving children the best chance to survive and thrive.

## THE POWER 4 INCLUDES:



**Prenatal vitamins for pregnant women**



**Vitamin A supplementation**



**Breastfeeding support for mothers**



**Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF)  
for treatment of wasting.**

**For over 50 years**, Food for the Hungry (FH) has worked to fight poverty, hunger, and malnutrition, partnering with individuals, churches, corporations, foundations, and governments to restore vulnerable communities and families to lives of health and hope. Central to these efforts are programs designed to:

- ✓ Ensure that pregnant women have access to quality prenatal vitamins
- ✓ Support breastfeeding mothers
- ✓ Provide Vitamin A supplementation
- ✓ Screen and refer for treatment those children suffering from wasting, the most acute form of malnutrition.



## **PRENATAL VITAMINS**

Micronutrient deficiencies during pregnancy are common, affecting two-thirds of women worldwide. But they can have serious consequences for both mother and baby. The increased nutritional requirements during pregnancy can make it particularly challenging for women in low- and middle-income countries to meet their nutritional needs. Quality prenatal vitamins called multiple micronutrient supplements (MMS) provide 15 key vitamins and minerals that reduce the risk of stillbirth, maternal mortality, and low birth weight, while providing mothers with the critical nutrients necessary for a healthy pregnancy and delivery. Incorporating MMS distribution into antenatal care visits can help ensure babies are given the best possible start in life. FH provides MMS in countries like Bolivia, Guatemala, and Uganda, integrating their distribution into maternal and child health programs and also partnering with governments where it is feasible to expand coverage.

## **BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT**

Breastfeeding is an incredibly effective way to ensure child survival and health. Breast milk provides a perfect blend of essential nutrients and protective antibodies, supporting optimal physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development and helping protect against illness and malnutrition. Globally, optimal breastfeeding practices could save the lives of an additional 823,000 children under 5 years old and 20,000 women each year. But in 2021, fewer than half of infants under six months of age received the protective benefits of exclusive breastfeeding. FH is working to change that through its innovative Care Group model in countries from Guatemala to Uganda to Indonesia, FH supports, equips, and mobilizes local mothers to become health educators in their own communities. FH Care Groups promote optimal, evidence-based breastfeeding practices. This includes early initiation of breastfeeding (ideally within an hour of birth), exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, and continued breastfeeding alongside nutritious complementary foods for the first two years of life or longer.

## **VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION**

Vitamin A deficiency can lead to childhood blindness and increases the risk of child death. Yet it is prevalent in low- and middle-income countries, affecting over half of children in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia. High dose Vitamin A supplementation (VAS) just twice a year successfully boosts child immunity and reduces the risk of preventable blindness and death. FH works in countries like the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and the Philippines to ensure twice-yearly delivery of Vitamin A supplementation to children under five years of age, which is key to improving child health and survival.

## **READY-TO-USE THERAPEUTIC FOOD (RUTF) FOR TREATMENT OF WASTING**

Globally, acute malnutrition is on the rise. UNICEF estimates the current global food and nutrition security crisis is pushing one child into severe malnutrition, or wasting, every minute. Wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition, leaves a child's body so starved of nutrients it begins to consume itself. But Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), a special paste packed with vital nutrients, can quickly and effectively restore the health of a severely malnourished child. Through Care Groups, FH provides community-based screening and treatment for children suffering from malnutrition in countries such as Uganda, working to prevent malnutrition from developing or worsening while ensuring access to life-saving RUTF for those children who need it.