



## MINISTRY OF HEALTH

### KEY NUTRITION MESSAGES IN PREVENTION OF COVID-19

**Goal: Keep immune System strong and the body healthy**

#### 1.0 MESSAGES FOR PREGNANT AND BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS, INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

##### a) Pregnant or Breastfeeding Women

- Meals for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers need to comprise at least 5 of 10 food groups daily necessary for their optimal nutrition and that of the baby.
- Maintain a healthy diet considering 1 extra small meal for pregnant women and 2 extra small meals for breastfeeding mothers.
- The food groups are:



**1. Grains, white roots and tubers, and plantains**



**2. Pulses (beans, peas and lentils)**



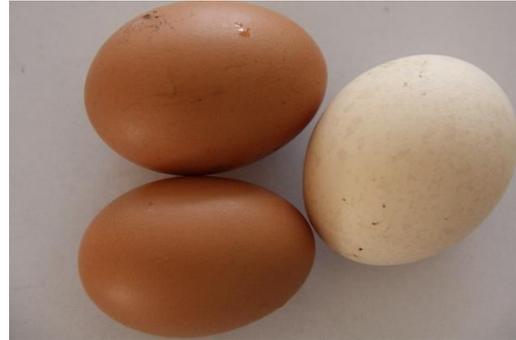
**3. Nuts and seeds**



**4. Dairy**



**5. Meat, poultry and fish**



**6. Eggs**



**7. Dark green leafy vegetables**



**8. Other vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables**



**9. Other vegetables**



**10. Other fruits**

**b) Babies Below 6 Months of Age**

- Give ONLY BREASTMILK to grow well and stay healthy.

**c) Children 6-23 Months or Older**

- Continue breastfeeding with appropriate complimentary feeding. Children need a variety of foods each day- at least 4 different foods from different food groups. The Food Groups are:

1. Grain, grain products & other starchy foods (e.g- maize, potato, rice);
2. Pulses/legumes (dried beans, peas, lentils, etc),
3. Eggs

4. Dairy & dairy products (e.g milk, lala, yoghurt),
  5. Animal/flesh foods (e.g-beef, chicken, fish),
  6. Vit A rich fruits and vegetables (e.g mangoe, pawpaw, terere, spinach, managu),
  7. Other fruits & vegetables (e.g Avocado, banana, orange, among others).
- For children who are ill, Encourage the child to drink and to eat - with lots of patience, Feed small amounts frequently, Give foods that the child likes, Give a variety of nutrient-rich foods, Continue to breastfeed – often ill children breastfeed more frequently.
  - During recovery from illness, Give extra breastfeeds, Feed an extra meal, Give extra amount of food, Use extra rich foods, Feed with **extra** patience and love.

**Note : Distribution of breast milk substitutes is prohibited.**

## 2.0 MESSAGES FOR ALL OTHER PEOPLE

- Maintain consumption of a healthy diet daily. Consume foods from at least 4 to 5 food groups daily as follows:
  - a) **Grains and grain products** and all other starch foods (maize/maize flour, rice, sweet potato, cassava)
  - b) **Legumes and pulses, nuts and seeds** - Alternate between peas, lentils, cowpeas, pigeon peas, soya, nuts edible seeds and **lean meat, fish/seafood and poultry** in your daily meals. Vary within the sources such as peas, beans, etc )
  - c) **Milk and milk products** – consume fresh milk, sour milk or yogurt daily.
  - d) Vegetables (alternate between **dark green leafy vegetables** such as indigenous vegetables (managu, terere, saga), spinach, sukuma, kunde, **vegetables that are yellow or orange** that give vitamin A for immunity such as carrots, pumpkin, sweet or bell pepper/hohos and **other vegetables** that do not fall in these two classes such as hohos, courgettes, cabbage, French beans
  - e) **Fruits** – eat plenty of fruits daily. Consume **yellow or orange fruits** such as mangoes, pawpaws that give us vitamin A for immunity, **citrous fruits** such as oranges, lemons that are rich in vitamin C for immunity and quick healing and **other fruits** like passions, melons, pinaeapples.
- Beyond maintaining a healthy diet, increase consumption of the yellow and orange fruits and citrouss fruits that help to maintain mucous membrane and boost immunity.
- Consume foods that reduce inflammation such as seeds, nuts, green leafy vegetables, fruits
- Avoid or reduce consumption of foods that cause inflammation such as highly refined and processed foods like highly processed cereals, proceesed meats (sausages, smokies), deep-fried foods, sugar sweetened drinks, trans fats, sweets.
- Undertake physical activity daily (activities such as running, walking, cycling, aerobic exercises. However keeping social distance should be a priority to prevent risk of infection
- Drink plenty of water. At a minimum drink 8 glasses (2 litres) spread throughout the day.
- Avoid consumption of alcohol, it inhibits good judgement and too much of it reduces the ability of your immune systems to fight infections

- Avoid smoking, it compromises the ability of the lungs to clear viruses, and increases complications for patients with COVID-19
- In case you are infected with COVID – 19, seek nutritional advice from your closest health worker for further management according to recommended protocols.
- Consider buying your foods from well aired markets and shops/ supermarkets where there is good social distance amongst the clients and sellers, as well as good standards of hygiene and sanitation with visible points of handwashing and waste disposal
- During family meals, appropriate hand washing and social distance should be maintained to prevent infection.

### **3.0 PLANNING FOR FOOD STOCKS**

- To ensure adequate food stocks in case of restriction of movement to prevent the spread of COVID-19, consider purchasing adequate stocks of non-perishable nutritious foods that can last beyond two weeks like the legumes and pulses, cereals, eggs, sour milks, long life milk, dried fruits or vegetables, dried fishes such as omena and obambla/mgongo wazi.
- For perishable produce, stock up unripened tomatoes, cabbages, onions, capsicum fruits and vegetables that can last several days. These are rich in boosting immunity.
- Store the vegetables in cool areas of the house.
- Avoid wastage in planning and consuming meals. Cook and eat only what is enough for the daily requirements as guided by a nutrition professional and put in place measures to avoid wastage.
- Take care of the elderly, homeless, sick and vulnerable persons that need care or may not have caregivers in your community. Offer them ready meals or food donations that are nutritious to take them through the season in case there is restriction of movement due to COVID-19.
- In case you live in areas of agricultural production, consume fresh fruits and vegetables from the farm avoiding any unnecessary wastage.
- Where you can access plenty of vegetables, fruits and flesh meats, drying of this in the correct way can ensure availability of food for long periods. Traditionally meats have been conserved in different communities to increase availability during lean times. Meats such as aliya, mgongo wazi, omena, nyirnyir are common meat based delicacies.

Approved for Circulation by:



Dr. Patrick Amoth

**Ag. Director General for Health**

**April 2020**