

INTRODUCTION

Zambia continues to face the challenge of long term under-nutrition among children five years of age and below, resulting in stunting.

A child is expected to grow to a minimum height of 80 cm by the age of two years. Less than 80 cm by this age, a child is said to be stunted - due to poor nutrition.

Naturally, human beings vary in height according to their genetic make-up. However, when a large number of a population is too short (or too tall) it is cause for concern. In Zambia, 4 out of ten children under the age of five are not naturally short but due to poor nutrition they have experienced stunted growth.

For a child, the foundation for a healthy and productive life is established in the first 1,000 days of life – the period from conception to the age of 2 years.

Nutrition in the first 1000 days of life

The problem of stunting starts with poor nutrition of women before, during and after pregnancy and is particularly noticeable during the child's first two years.

The first 1000 days is a period of rapid formation and growth of all the vital organs; the brain is especially active and much of it is fully developed by the end of the first 1000 days of life.

For these processes to occur correctly critical nutritional needs are required. This is why Zambia now refers to this period as the 1st 1000 Most Critical Days.

Losses in a child's development during the first 1000 Most Critical Days of life can never be fully regained. A child deprived of good nutrition over a long period of time is at higher risk of increased childhood diseases, death or reduced cognitive functions later in life affecting school performance, productivity in adulthood, as well as adult chronic diseases like obesity, cancer, heart and liver problems.

Your Role as a media officer

You play a key role in increasing nationwide knowledge, awareness, ownership and support around the first 1000 most critical day's program. Just like you have taken lead in sensitizing the general public on various matters, you are yet again called upon to arise to champion nutrition in the 1st 1000 days to prevent child stunting.

1. Familiarise yourselves with nutrition in the first 1000 most critical days through available literature including the toolkit.
2. Familiarise yourselves with the 1st 1000 Most Critical Days fourteen priority intervention areas (minimum package)
3. Familiarise yourselves with government policies that are nutrition related

4. During your editorial meetings identify nutrition related issues in your areas for possible coverage.

5. Collaborate with the 1st 1000 MCD national and districts communication and advocacy technical working groups on nutrition

6. Identify and provide media coverage on nutrition especially those related to the priority interventions

7. During your planning meetings include budgets for nutrition radio and TV documentaries, programmes, jingles, panel discussions and debates. For print media, write features, editorials and news articles and saturate the



Republic of Zambia

The Media Arise to stop Child Stunting

For more information Contact

For further information contact
National Food and Nutrition Commission,
P.O. BOX 32699 Lusaka.
Tel: 227803/221098, Fax: 221426,
www.nfnc.org.zm

Printed with financial support from UNICEF

