



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Health  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

March 23, 2020

**DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM**

No. 2020 – 0165

**TO: ALL UNDERSECRETARIES AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF HEALTH; MINISTER OF HEALTH - BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO (MOH-BARMM); EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL (NNC); ALL DIRECTORS OF BUREAUS, SERVICES, AND CENTERS FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT (CHDs); ALL EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALTY HOSPITALS; ALL CHIEFS OF MEDICAL CENTERS, HOSPITALS, AND SANITARIA; AND OTHERS CONCERNED**

**SUBJECT: Interim Guidelines for Registered Nutritionist-Dietitians in Hospitals on the Nutritional and Dietary Management of Suspected, Probable, and Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Patients and on the Provision of Healthy Diet to Hospital Workforce**

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**I. BACKGROUND**

The Nutrition and Dietetics Service (NDS) in hospitals participates in the multidisciplinary management of patients through delivery of adequate and appropriate dietary requirements for patient's better prognosis. To address the nutritional needs and to provide standard nutrition intervention for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) patients, and to ensure the nutritional needs of the health workers, the Department of Health (DOH) hereby issues these guidelines for the use of the Registered Nutritionist-Dietitians (RNDs) of the hospitals.

**II. OBJECTIVE**

These guidelines shall guide hospital RNDs on the nutritional and dietary management and intervention for suspected, probable, and confirmed COVID-19 patients, and the provision of healthy and nutritious food for the workforce in hospitals.

**III. SCOPE AND COVERAGE**

This issuance shall cover all RNDs of public and private hospitals with admitted suspected, probable, and confirmed COVID-19 patients.

**IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- A. All RNDs shall adopt the latest COVID-19 Case Definitions for Surveillance as defined in the Department Memorandum (DM) No.2020-0138, "Adoption of PSMID Clinical Practice Guidelines on COVID-19" (See Annex A).
- B. Nutrition Care Plan shall be individualized depending on the nutritional status of the patient and on the severity of cases.

- C. Provision of food shall be, at the minimum, simple, easily or locally available, easy to prepare, can satisfy appetite, provide adequate nutrition, help boost the immune system, and can be tolerated by the patients. The following Annexes may be referred to:
  - 1. Annex B for Sample Menu for Patients Who Can Tolerate Solid Foods;
  - 2. Annex C for Sample Menu for Patients Who Cannot Tolerate Solids;
  - 3. Annex D for Sample Menu for Various Situations.
- D. Diet recommendations for COVID-19 patients shall include low carbohydrate diet, high protein diet, and neutropenic or low bacteria diet.
- E. The hospital RNDs shall provide food items that are rich in nutrients and minerals such as Vitamin C, Vitamin A and  $\beta$ -carotene, Vitamin D, B-vitamins, folate, zinc, protein, fat, with emphasis on bioflavonoids, probiotics, prebiotics, and resveratrol.
- F. The hospital RNDs shall provide food items that have known anti-inflammatory effects, such as ginger, turmeric, garlic, bell peppers, and onions in recipes/meals.
- G. Medical nutritionals, such as vitamins, minerals, prebiotics, and probiotics supplementation shall be considered to encourage intake of total calories required, which aid in boosting the immune system.
- H. Pertinent provisions in the DOH Department Circular, "Interim Guidelines on Preparation and Handling of Food in Temporary Treatment and Monitoring Facilities for COVID-19 Patients" shall be followed, as applicable.

## V. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

### A. Severe and Critically-ill Suspected, Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 Patients

1. **Recommended dietary prescription.** The following dietary prescription shall be recommended:
  - e. Total energy requirement: 25-30 kilocalories (kcal) per kg body weight;
  - f. Total protein requirement: 1.2-2.0 gm/kg body weight daily;
  - g. Carbohydrate: 50-60% of non-protein calories; and
  - h. Fat: 40-50% of non-protein calories.
2. **Medical nutritionals/oral feeding.** Medical nutritionals/oral feeding shall be encouraged for early intestinal nutrition that can provide nutritional support, nourish intestines, improve intestinal mucosal barrier and intestinal immunity, and maintain intestinal microecology.
3. **Enteral nutrition.** The following shall be considered for enteral nutrition:
  - a) For severe and critically-ill patients with acute gastrointestinal damages, manifested as abdominal distension, diarrhea, and gastroparesis, enteral nutrition shall be recommended.
  - b) For patients with intestinal damage, predigested short peptide preparations, which are easy for intestinal absorption and utilization shall be recommended.
  - c) For patients with good intestinal functions, whole-protein preparations with relatively high calories shall be recommended.
  - d) For hyperglycemia patients, nutritional preparations which are beneficial to glycemic control shall be recommended.
  - e) Enteral formulas designed to reduce inflammation and promote healing shall be given to patients with acute lung injuries or acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). Enteral formulas are typically fortified with omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidant nutrients. Nutrient-dense formulas (1.5 to 2.0 kcal/ml) shall be

- prescribed to patients with fluid restrictions. Note that high doses of omega-3 fatty acids enriched formula shall not be given by bolus feeding to ICU patients.
- f) For patients with tracheal intubation, intestinal nutrition tube indwelling shall be recommended for post-pyloric feeding.
  - g) Pump infusion of nutrients shall be used at a uniform speed, starting with a low dosage and gradually increasing. If possible, the nutrients shall be reheated in a hot water bath before feeding to reduce intolerance.
4. **Parenteral nutrition.** Temporary parenteral nutrition shall be considered for patients who are at high aspiration risk, particularly the elderly, and patients with apparent abdominal distention. Parenteral nutrition may be gradually replaced by independent diet or enteral nutrition once the patient's condition improves.
5. **The American Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN) and European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN)** released issuances on *Nutrition Therapy in the Patient with COVID-19 Disease Requiring ICU Care*, and on *ESPEN expert statements and practical guidance for nutritional management of individuals with SARS-CoV-2 infection*, respectively, to serve as reference on the management of COVID-19 patients. These documents can be accessed and downloaded at [bit.ly/ASPENESPENcovid19](https://bit.ly/ASPENESPENcovid19).

#### **B. Suspected and Probable COVID-19 Patients**

1. The standard calorie content of food served per day shall be 1,800 kcal. The following serving portions per meal shall apply:
  - a. Rice and alternatives – optional, as patients already have respiratory problems;
  - b. Vegetable dish – ½ cup (100g);
  - c. Protein – preferably plant-based sources, meat, fish, poultry (8 servings per kilo - 125g raw weight, 80g edible weight);
  - d. Dessert – 1 piece (preferably fruit such as banana, apple, or orange);
  - e. Beverage – water, fresh fruit juice, or smoothies.
2. Excessive use of salt, oil, and other condiments shall be avoided. Appropriate amounts of herbs and spices shall be used to make meals palatable.
3. Regular physical activity shall be recommended for older adults to improve their immune system responses. Loss of muscle mass can be more readily prevented or reversed if the treatment plan includes an effective exercise program. With exercise, patients are likely to see improvements in their endurance and become less fearful of their physical limitations. For some patients, the combination of an exercise plan and oral supplementation may be better for maintaining weight and improving muscle mass than either component of treatment alone.
4. Proposed meal plans in Annexes A, B, and C shall serve as guides for meal planning.

#### **C. Suspected, Probable, and Confirmed COVID-19 Patients with comorbidities**

1. All COVID-19 patients with comorbidities shall be managed in accordance with the needs and demands of the patient's condition.
2. For patients with heart disease, a low salt-low fat diet is recommended. Low amounts of sodium in the diet prevents fluid build up and high blood pressure. Meanwhile, a low fat diet aids in maintaining good cholesterol levels in the body.

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3. For patients with diabetes, the total calories and macronutrient requirements of the patient shall be computed. It shall be noted that low carbohydrate intake is associated with lower sugar levels in the blood. Timing and amount of meals shall be considered in providing dietary prescription.
4. For patients needing renal care, dietary management shall be based on the nutritional assessment of the patient and on the doctor's prescription. Electrolyte imbalance and fluid retention shall be monitored and managed.


**D. Fluid Intake Requirement for all patient**

1. Fluid requirement shall be monitored daily to prevent fluid imbalance. The recommended fluid intake shall be 1.0 to 1.5 ml/kcal and 1.5 ml/kcal for adults and for infants, respectively.
2. Fluid restriction may be required for some patients to prevent edema in lung tissue, whereas others may become dehydrated due to diuretic therapy, an increase in bronchial secretions, or a low fluid intake. The presence of edema can make it difficult to assess whether a critically ill patient is maintaining weight.

**E. Hospital and Medical Center Workforce**

1. The hospital NDS shall take charge in providing food to the workforce, to provide the needed nourishment during this period of emergency and crisis.
2. The NDS shall plan a balanced diet for the hospital workforce, which is rich in macronutrients (carbohydrates, protein, and fat) and micronutrients (vitamin and minerals).
3. All workforce shall take multivitamins and mineral supplements.
4. Donated food items shall be allocated only to the hospital workforce and shall not be used for patients. Equitable distribution to all departments shall be observed. Expiration date of the donated food shall be monitored and checked regularly to avoid food poisoning.
5. Proposed two-week cycle menu in Annex D shall serve as a guide for meal planning.
6. All workforce under NDS shall be provided with proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) while on duty for infection control and prevention, and to ensure compliance to food safety rules and procedures.

For strict compliance.

  
**FRANCISCO T. DUQUE, III, MD, MSc**  
Secretary of Health

**Annex A. Corresponding Old vs New COVID-19 Case Definitions for Surveillance as lifted from DOH Department Memorandum No. 2020-0138 Adoption of PSMID Clinical Practice Guidelines on COVID-19**

| <b>OLD Classification</b>  | <b>New Classification</b>                               |
|--|---|
| Neither PUI nor PUM  | Non-COVID case  |
| PUM  | Possible case (With exposure/ contact, but no symptoms) |
| PUI-mild, severe and critical who has not been tested and for testing                | Suspect   |
| PUI- mild. Severe and critical with inconclusive, inadequate or no available testing | Probable  |
| COVID-19 positive  | Confirmed   |

**Annex B. Sample Menu for Patients Who Can Tolerate Solid Food**

| <b>Day</b> | <b>Breakfast</b>   | <b>Lunch</b>  | <b>Dinner</b>  |
|------------|--|---|--|
| <b>1</b>   | Fruit (available/in season)<br>Chicken Sopas<br>Fried daing na bangus<br>Rice<br>Tea/Salabat               | Tinola chicken with<br>Malunggay and sayote<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water                                     | Sautéed Cabbage Soup with<br>chicken meat flakes<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water           |
| <b>2</b>   | Fruit (available/in season)<br>Arroz Caldo with Boiled<br>Egg<br>Puto<br>Tea/Salabat                       | Munggo soup with<br>malunggay<br>Paksiw na bangus with<br>ampalaya and eggplant<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water | Bistek na Boneless Bangus<br>with Onions<br>Sautéed petsay<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water |
| <b>3</b>   | Fruit (available/in season)<br>Miswa Soup with Patola<br>Fried Tinapa<br>Rice<br>Tea/Salabat               | Fried Fish<br>Ginisang Repolyo<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water  | Ampalaya with tuna<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water   |
| <b>4</b>   | Fruit (available/in season)<br>Squash Soup<br>Fried Egg<br>Bread/Pandesal<br>Tea/Salabat                   | Sinigang na Boneless Bangus<br>with kangkong , okra, and<br>gabi<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water                | Fried Alumahan<br>Cucumber salad<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water                           |
| <b>5</b>   | Fruit (available/in season)<br>Cream of Mushroom Soup<br>Scrambled egg<br>Bread/Pandesal<br>Tea/Salabat    | Nilagang manok with potato,<br>cabbage and petsay<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water                               | Sarciadong Isda<br>Sautéed Stringbeans<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water                     |
| <b>6</b>   | Fruit (available/in season)<br>Omelet with onion and<br>garlic<br>Fried Dilis<br>Fried Rice<br>Tea/Salabat | Pochero with petsay and<br>cabbage<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water  | Sautéed String Beans<br>Chicken Fillet<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water                     |
| <b>7</b>   | Fruit (available/in season)<br>Scrambled Egg<br>Fried Galunggong<br>Rice<br>Tea/Salabat                    | Pesang Isda with pechay and<br>sayote<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water   | Pork Adobo<br>Sauteed Cabbage<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)<br>Water                              |

**Annex C. Sample Menu for Patients Who Can Only Tolerate Soft Diet. (Might need to be supported by Medical Nutritionals)**

| <b>Days</b> | <b>Breakfast</b>                                    | <b>Lunch</b>                                       | <b>Dinner</b>  |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| <b>1</b>    | Cream of mushroom soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice/Salabat | Spinach (Kolitis) soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice        | Tinola soup with<br>Malunggay<br>Water/Fruit Juice       |
| <b>2</b>    | Arroz caldo<br>Water/ Fruit Juice/Salabat           | Macaroni soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice                 | Squash soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice                         |
| <b>3</b>    | Miswa with Egg<br>Water/ Fruit Juice/Salabat        | Veggie soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice                   | Cream of Mushroom<br>soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice           |
| <b>4</b>    | Squash Soup<br>Water/ Fruit Juice/Salabat           | Tinola soup with<br>malunggay<br>Water/Fruit Juice | Lugao<br>Water/Fruit Juice                               |
| <b>5</b>    | Chicken Noodle Soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice            | Macaroni soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice                 | Spinach (Kulitis) soup<br>Water/ Fruit Juice/<br>Salabat |
| <b>6</b>    | Oatmeal<br>Water/ Fruit Juice /Salabat              | Veggie soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice                   | Squash soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice                         |
| <b>7</b>    | Lugao<br>Water/ Fruit Juice /Salabat                | Tinola soup with<br>malunggay<br>Water/Fruit Juice | Miswa soup<br>Water/Fruit Juice                          |

**Annex D. Sample Menu for Various Situations (Sample Survival Kit)**

| <b>Situation</b>                        | <b>Breakfast</b>  | <b>Lunch</b>  | <b>Supper</b>   | <b>Snack</b>  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>No fuel,<br/>No water</i>            | Bottled fruit juice<br>Crackers/Biscuits                              | Bottled fruit juice<br>Canned pork &<br>beans<br>Crackers                     | Canned vegetables<br>Sardines<br>Crackers/buns<br>Bottled fruit juice | Biscuits<br>Bottled fruit juice   |
| <i>Fuel available,<br/>No water</i>     | Bottled fruit juice<br>Bread, if available<br>or<br>crackers/biscuits | Canned<br>vegetables<br>Sautéed corned<br>beef<br>Buns<br>Bottled fruit juice | Sautéed tuna<br>Bread with<br>margarine<br>Bottled fruit juice        | Biscuits<br>Bottled fruit juice   |
| <i>Water<br/>available,<br/>No fuel</i> | Bottled water<br>Biscuits   | Canned soup<br>Luncheon meat<br>Bread<br>Candies                              | Canned vegetables<br>Canned tuna<br>Bread<br>Bottled water            | Bread with liver<br>spread, if available<br>or<br>Biscuits<br>Bottled water |
| <i>Water and fuel<br/>available</i>     | Champorado<br>Fried fish<br>Bottled water                             | Noodle Soup<br>Chicken Adobo<br>Rice<br>Fruit cocktail                        | Pork Nilaga<br>Rice<br>Banana or canned<br>fruit                      | Bread/ margarine<br>Bottled water   |

*NOTE: Menu variations may vary depending on the availability of food supplies in the area.*



**Annex E. Sample Two-Week Cycle Menu**

| <b>DAY 1</b>   |                               |   |                         |  |
|--|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------|--|
| <b>BREAKFAST</b>   | <b>MORNING SNACKS</b>         | <b>LUNCH</b>  | <b>AFTERNOON SNACKS</b> | <b>DINNER</b>  |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Boiled Egg<br>Fried Daing na Bangus<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco   | Pancit bihon<br>Water         | Fried Fish<br>Chopsuey<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)                       | Cookies<br>Water        | Chicken Adobo<br>Ginisang Repolyo<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)           |
| <b>DAY 2</b>   |                               |   |                         |  |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Boiled egg<br>Fried Chicken<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco           | Pandesal with Cheese<br>Water | Fried Porkchop<br>Sauteed Carrots and Sayote<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season) | Pancit canton<br>Water  | Fried Tilapia<br>Cucumber Salad<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)             |
| <b>DAY 3</b>   |                               |   |                         |  |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Salted Egg<br>Fried Dilis<br>Tomatoes<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco | Cheese roll<br>Water          | Fried Tilapia<br>Sauteed Pechay<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)              | Macaroni Sopas<br>Water | Chicken Tinola with Pechay and Sayote<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)       |
| <b>DAY 4</b>   |                               |   |                         |  |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Boiled Egg<br>Fried Bangus<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco            | Pandelimon with cheese water  | Pork Bistek<br>Ginisang Repolyo<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)              | Ensaymada<br>Water      | Adobong Baboy<br>Sauteed Sayote and Carrots<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season) |
| <b>DAY 5</b>   |                               |   |                         |  |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Boiled Egg<br>Fried Galunggong<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco        | Turon<br>Water                | Beef Steak<br>Chopsuey<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)                       | Spaghetti<br>Water      | Paksiw na Bangus with Talong and Ampalaya<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)   |
| <b>DAY 6</b>   |                               |   |                         |  |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Potato Omelet<br>Pork Adobo<br>Rice<br>Coffee/Choco             | Pandesal with spread<br>Water | Fried Chicken<br>Sauteed Baguio Beans<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)        | Banana Cue<br>Water     | Pesang Tilapia with Pechay and chayote<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)      |
| <b>DAY 7</b>   |                               |   |                         |  |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Scrambled Egg<br>Breaded Porkchop<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco     | Banana cake<br>Water          | Paksiw na Bangus with Talong and Ampalaya<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)    | Turon<br>Water          | Fried Tilapia<br>Ampalaya Sauté<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)             |

| <b>DAY 8</b>   |                               |  |                                       |   |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>BREAKFAST</b>   | <b>MORNING SNACKS</b>         | <b>LUNCH</b>   | <b>AFTERNOON SNACKS</b>               | <b>DINNER</b>   |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Boiled Egg<br>Adobo chicken flakes<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco          | Pandesal with cheese<br>Water | Fried Fish<br>Adobong<br>Kangkong<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)       | Kamote Cue<br>Wate                    | Fried Chicken<br>Sayote-Carrots<br>Sauté<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)         |
| <b>DAY 9</b>   |                               |  |                                       |   |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Scrambled Egg with Tomatoes<br>Fried Tinapa<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco | Biko<br>Water                 | Pork Bistek<br>Chopsuey<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)                 | Biscuit<br>Water                      | Chicken Adobo<br>Pickled Vegetables<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)              |
| <b>DAY 10</b>  |                               |  |                                       |   |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Tortang Talong with Pork Giniling<br>Boiled Egg<br>Tomatoes<br>Rice   | Pandesal with spread<br>Water | Tokwa't Baboy<br>Squash-Patola<br>Sauté<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season) | Chicken Arroz Caldo with egg<br>Water | Fried Galunggong<br>Ginisang Pechay<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)              |
| <b>DAY 11</b>  |                               |  |                                       |   |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Paksiw na Bangus<br>Fried Rice<br>Coffee / Choco                      | Ensaymada<br>Water            | Pork Giniling with Egg<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)                  | Cheese Roll<br>Water                  | Fried Chicken Upo Sauté<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)                          |
| <b>DAY 12</b>  |                               |  |                                       |   |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Spanish Omelet<br>Tuyo and Tomatoes<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco         | Cupcake<br>Water              | Pork Asado<br>Pinakbet<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)                  | Maruya<br>Water                       | Fried Daing na Bangus<br>Sayote-Carrots<br>Sauté<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season) |
| <b>DAY 13</b>  |                               |  |                                       |   |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Scrambled Egg<br>Salmon<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco                     | Adobo Roll<br>Water           | Pork Nilaga<br>Chop Suey<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)                | Chicken Mami<br>Water                 | Chicken Tinola with pechay and sayote<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)            |
| <b>DAY 14</b>  |                               |  |                                       |   |
| Fruit (available/in season)<br>Boiled Egg<br>Chicken Adobo<br>Rice<br>Coffee / Choco                 | Cookies<br>Water              | Fried Chicken Sautéed Upo<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)               | Asado Roll<br>Wate                    | Adobong Baboy Sautéed Sayote and Carrots<br>Rice<br>Fruit (available/in season)         |