This interim guideline provides recommendations on nutritional support to adults and paediatric patients in Ebola treatment unit (ETUs). It highlights the key clinical problems in patients affected by Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) that would interfere with nutritional status and support of patients; what the nutritional needs are; and what nutritional support should be given in the context of the current Ebola crisis. This interim guideline does not provide specific advice on fluid management in cases of vomiting; diarrhoea and dehydration (see ref1 for guidance), or parenteral nutrition.

This interim guideline focuses on nutritional support in all EVD patients during treatment and convalescence in ETUs whilst ensuring safety of health staff and caretakers. It is not a clinical management guideline, but focuses on practical aspects of patients’ nutritional care. It does not focus specifically on malnourished patients. The aim is to provide guidance to programme managers and relevant health staff of organisations that implement or contribute to EVD treatment programmes as well as Ministries of Health.

This interim guideline lays out some basic principles of nutritional care for patients with EVD. The application of the recommendations provided will vary with the context and capacity. Treatment centres for EVD vary from having a few to hundreds of patients; from having resource limitations to being fully equipped; from having a few to sufficient numbers of staff, etc. This interim guideline should be adapted accordingly. While the guidance applies to Ebola Treatment Units, the nutritional principles apply to anyone with Ebola virus disease.

It is anticipated that this guidance will be updated within 6 months. The update will include additional research and input from technical and operational experts. In the meantime, comments and queries should be shared with nutrition@who.int and nutrition@unicef.org

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