Severe acute malnutrition or severe wasting means a child is so undernourished that they are at risk of dying. These children are nine times more likely to die.

Eating Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food can help them recover quickly.

In Nigeria, a community-based approach led by the government is reaching large numbers of caregivers and young children.

The story so far

In 2009, the Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition programme started in two states. In the initial programme, 30,000 children were reached by the programme. By 2015, 1 million malnourished children were treated in Nigeria.

Invisible yet deadly

Severe acute malnutrition is invisible yet deadly. One million children under five have been admitted since 2009.

It doesn’t cost much to cure a child

It doesn’t cost much to cure a child suffering from severe wasting. It costs $160 to cure a child suffering from severe wasting.

Reaching more children

More funding is required to increase coverage of this successful nutrition programme to where it’s most needed. Why aren’t more children reaching the programme?

What are the barriers?

There are a number of barriers. Inability to recognize the signs of severe wasting and incorrect beliefs about traditional remedies are the main reasons caregivers give to their children not being treated.

In Nigeria, Northern Nigeria has high rates of severe wasting. The programme has expanded, but treatment is not yet available everywhere.

Only 1 in 3 severely wasted children in Northern Nigeria is being treated.

Children under five

More funding is required to increase coverage of this successful nutrition programme. The programme is reaching only 85% of children under five who could benefit.

More children’s lives saved

Children’s lives are being saved since 2009. A total of 281,000 children have been treated since 2009.

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