



WFP/Riccardo Gangale

Mother-and-Child Health and Nutrition Program

A pregnant woman's health and nutrition has a direct impact on fetal development. Whenever an expectant mother is well nourished, the risk of low birth weight and stunted growth is significantly reduced.

Friends of the World Food Program (Friends of WFP) provides support for life-saving food and nutrition education at the most critical times in the lives of pregnant women and developing children.

Inherited Hunger

When pregnant women are undernourished, their children often are born under a healthy weight, making them four times more likely to die in infancy. Every year, more than 13 million children are born with low birth weight. In addition, newborns and infants are most vulnerable to undernutrition and infection. Undernutri-

tion contributes to 53 percent of the 9.7 million deaths of children under five each year in developing countries. Those who do survive are more likely to remain undernourished throughout childhood. The impact is lifelong: They may face major health challenges and learning difficulties.

Nutrition Intervention

However, with assistance from the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), mothers are able to have healthy deliveries, and babies and young children are growing and developing properly.

In 2007, WFP provided supplemental nutritional support to nearly 6 million undernourished children and 2 million women who were at risk. Children between ages 6 and 24 months who are well fed experience healthy development and can catch up on their growth more quickly. Ultimately, the right nutrition at the right time will make a lifelong difference.



Friends of WFP/Maria Reppas

Maria Lucia, Guatemala

Four months pregnant, Maria Lucia, 24, also was caring for 16-month-old twins Maria Jose (left) and Isabela Melissa (right). Her husband, Emanuel Humberto, worked for minimum wage in another city. But Maria found help in Vitacereal™ from WFP. Developed by the WFP's Guatemala office, Vitacereal is a blend of maize, soy and micronutrients that helps end the cycle of undernutrition from mother to child. It's given to pregnant and nursing mothers and children ages 6 months to 3 years. "I'm grateful for Vitacereal," Maria says. "I drink it twice a day, and I will continue to take it for as long as I can."

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