

Nutrition is an important public health priority for Egypt. Egypt made important progress reducing child-stunting rates from 35% in the early 90s to just over 20% in 2003. Nevertheless, data shows that Egypt has fallen back in this progress and that there has been an increase in the prevalence of stunted children from 17.6% (DHS, 2005) to 28.9% (DHS, 2008) in recent years.

Iron deficiency anemia and folic acid deficiency are also an ongoing challenge. The 2005 DHS revealed that the prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia among children two to five years is 40% with similar prevalence among women of reproductive age.

In line with the National Nutrition Plan, WHO is working with Egypt to address major challenges in nutrition facing Egypt today through implementing strategic interventions, such as flour fortification, salt reduction, harmful fat replacement, and implementing an iodine national assessment survey.

Using evidence-based best practices, WHO is working with Egypt to develop a flour fortification program in order to enhance nutrition and health by improving micronutrient status. Wheat flour, a common staple in the Egyptian diet, will become a vehicle for fortification with a micronutrient premix including iron, folic acid and others. Through working with the National Nutrition Institute (NNI) in Egypt, the Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade, the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) and the World Food Programme, the program will be able to fight the high prevalence of iron deficiency anemia and neural tube defects among infants less than 5 years, and pregnant and lactating mothers.

In line with the targets outlined Global Action Plan for Noncommunicable Diseases WHO is also working with Egypt to achieve a reduction in salt in the diet by 30%, and to replace trans fats. WHO supports the NNI in an initiative that will lower salt and fat in the Egyptian diet, leading to a decline in noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

Research plays an important role in improving nutrition. WHO supports a current national iodine assessment is underway to establish the amount of salt found in bread through laboratory sampling. WHO also works with Egypt to develop research into current initiatives being conducted in malnutrition prevention and assess their impact.

Related links

[Nutrition](#)

[Food labelling and marketing](#)

[Iodine deficiency, see Micronutrients](#)

[Regional nutrition programme](#)

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