



# Admission and Discharge Criteria for the Management of Severe Acute Malnutrition in Children under 5

## Inpatient Care

## Outpatient Care

### ADMISSION CRITERIA

#### CHILDREN 6–59 MONTHS

- Bilateral pitting oedema +++  
**OR**  
 Any grade of bilateral pitting oedema with severe wasting (MUAC < 115 mm or WFH < -3 z-score)

**OR**

- SAM with any of the following medical complications:
- Anorexia, poor appetite
  - Intractable vomiting
  - Convulsions
  - Lethargy, not alert
  - Unconsciousness
  - Hypoglycaemia
  - High fever
  - Hypothermia
  - Severe dehydration
  - Persistent diarrhoea
  - Lower respiratory tract infection
  - Severe anaemia
  - Eye signs of vitamin A deficiency
  - Skin lesion

**OR**

- Referred from Outpatient Care according to action protocol

#### INFANTS < 6 MONTHS

(Includes infants with SAM ≥ 6 months and < 4 kg)

- Bilateral pitting oedema

**OR**

- Visible wasting

#### CHILDREN 6–59 MONTHS

- Bilateral pitting oedema + or ++  
**OR**  
 Severe wasting (MUAC < 115 mm or WFH < -3 z-score)

**AND**

- Appetite test passed
- No medical complication
- Child clinically well and alert

### REFERRAL/DISCHARGE CRITERIA

#### CHILDREN 6–59 MONTHS

- Referred to Outpatient Care:
- Appetite returned (passed appetite test)
  - Medical complication resolving
  - Severe bilateral pitting oedema decreasing
  - Child clinically well and alert
- (additional criterion for referral for cases of oedema with wasting: bilateral pitting oedema resolved)
- Discharged cured (special cases):
- 15 percent weight gain maintained for 2 consecutive weeks (of admission weight or weight free of oedema) (for cases of wasting and of oedema with wasting)
  - Oedema-free for 2 consecutive weeks
  - Child clinically well and alert

#### INFANTS < 6 MONTHS

- Discharged cured (for breastfed infants):
- Successful re-lactation and appropriate weight gain maintained (minimum 20 g per day on breastfeeding alone for 5 days) and infant clinically well and alert
  - Oedema-free for 2 consecutive weeks

(See other guidance for non-breastfed infants who are on replacement feeding.)

#### CHILDREN 6–59 MONTHS

- Discharged cured:
- 15 percent weight gain maintained for 2 weeks (of admission weight or weight free of oedema)
  - Oedema-free for 2 consecutive weeks
  - Child clinically well and alert

Children are referred to receive supplementary feeding if available.