



Panel approves nutrition norms

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Highlights

- India's top nutrition panel has recommended that severely malnourished children must be fed freshly cooked food prepared from locally available cereals, pulses and vegetables, and distributed by anganwadi centres, as part of the country's first-ever guidelines for nutritional management of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).
- The National Technical Board on Nutrition (NTBN) has approved guidelines proposed by Women and Child Development Ministry for severe acute malnutrition.
- The measures are part of the community-based health management of children suffering from SAM.
- The government had, till now, only put in place guidelines for the hospitalisation of severely wasted children who develop medical complications which were made public in 2011.
- The norms were okayed by a scientific sub-committee under the NTBN, according to the minutes of the meeting issued last week.

Anganwadi workers

- The guidelines outline the role of anganwadi workers and auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) in identifying severely wasted children, segregating those with oedema or medical complications and sending them to the nearest health facility or nutrition rehabilitation centres.
- The remaining children are enrolled into "community based management", which includes provision of nutrition, continuous monitoring of growth, administration of antibiotics and micro-nutrients as well as counselling sessions and imparting of nutrition and health education.
- According to the recommendations, anganwadi workers have to provide modified morning snacks, hot cooked meals and take home ration for SAM children.
- Importantly, the government has also revised the method to be used to measure wasting and advised calculating weight based on the height of children instead of the mid-upper arm circumference.