



The impact of COVID-19 on sexual and reproductive health and the way forward

5 May 2020



SRH Service Availability

MOH

- West Bank – Resumed routine antenatal, postnatal, and family planning services (except IUD insertion), with exceptions in some localities, and limited hours and number of clients
- Safe delivery and neonatal is ongoing at hospitals for women without suspected/confirmed COVID19,

UNRWA

- Facilities are open and providing SRH services, including maternal health



NGOs

- Major NGOs have reopened many of their fixed facilities and are receiving clients
- Many are providing home/mobile clinic PHC services
- Some adapted services, such as providing 3 months of contraceptives at once, instead of 1 month



Major Challenges - SRH



- Many pregnant and lactating women are not attending PHC services, due to fear and lack of transportation. Attendance increased slightly in April, however, is significantly lower than April 2019 (NGOs reported around 60% decrease from last year).
- Preparing select hospitals for safe delivery and neonatal care for pregnant women and neonates with suspected/confirmed COVID-19.
- Transportation for women, especially during labor, which increases risk of home deliveries and related complications.
- Transportation for healthcare staff, particularly nurses and midwives, who are walking long distances to reach healthcare facilities.



Major Challenges – SRH (cont.)



- Many SRH doctors have been moved to COVID19 centers
- PPE and infection prevention and control in PHCs and maternity and neonatal wards
- Nutrition, particularly for pregnant and lactating women, due to economic impact of COVID19
- Disruptions to SRH services, such as family planning and STI testing/treatment – risk of unplanned pregnancy and STIs can cause long term health problems



Critical actions required - SRH

- Prepare select hospitals for safe delivery and neonatal services for pregnant women with suspected/confirmed COVID19
- PPE and IPC training for staff providing SRH and neonatal services
- Community awareness - when/where to seek SRH services, including family planning
- Home/mobile clinic services for women who cannot go to PHC facilities
- Transportation - staff and beneficiaries
- Nutrition for PLW, including breastfeeding – community awareness and provision of food/food vouchers and/or supplements
- Mental health and Psychosocial support (MHPSS) for pregnant and lactating women (PLW)
- Procure critical maternal and child health supplies (pharmaceuticals, disposables, equipment)



SRH Situation in Gaza

- MOH primary health care services are mostly focused on high risk cases and around 1/3 of PHCs remain closed, due to deployment of health staff to quarantine centres
- Outpatient clinics at maternities have resumed
- UNRWA and NGO facilities are operating
- Key actions are similar to the West Bank



Minimum essential SRH Services in emergencies

1. Prevent excess maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality
2. Prevent unintended pregnancies
3. Prevent sexual violence and respond to the needs of survivors
4. Prevent transmission of and reduce morbidity and mortality due to HIV and other STIs
5. Plan for comprehensive SRH services, integrated into PHC, as soon as possible, according to the 6 health system building blocks
6. SRH coordination within the cluster system

<https://iawg.net/resources/minimum-initial-service-package-misp-resources>



Long term considerations / Development Nexus

- Possible increase in maternal/neonatal mortality and morbidity, due to deterioration of health system and other determinants of health (ie. socioeconomic environment)
- Nutrition among PLW, due to economic situation for families
- Unintended pregnancies due to lack of access to family planning
- Possible increase in child marriage, leading to a range of health, well-being, and protection issues
- Lack of and diversion of resources (national and donor)





Guidelines – SRH during COVID19

Minimal Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health in Emergencies (MISP)

WHO - COVID19

- Maintaining essential health services

UNFPA guidelines - <https://www.unfpa.org/covid19>

- **COVID-19 Technical Brief for Maternity Services**
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Modern Contraceptives and Other Medical Supply Needs, Including for COVID-19 Prevention, Protection and Response.
- Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage
- Gender Equality and Addressing Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Prevention, Protection and Response.



Guidelines (cont.)



[UNICEF guidelines](#) - ECD site dedicated for COVID-19 under the heading “Maternal and Newborn Health”

- Guidance Note on Programming Approaches and Priorities to Prevent, Mitigate and Address Immediate Health and Socio-economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic on Children
- FAQs Maternal, Newborn and Adolescent Health during the COVID-19 pandemic Evidence Review
- [Data to inform COVID19 response](#)

Maternal and child nutrition and COVID19

- [The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health](#)
- [Healthy Newborn Network](#)



Comments / Questions?

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