

# CONSUMPTION OF VITAMIN A RICH FOODS AMONG CHILDREN

Outcome indicator

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## Indicator Phrasing

**English:** % of children aged 6–23/59 months who consumed a vitamin A rich food the previous day or night

**French:** % d'enfants âgés de 6 à 23/59 mois ayant consommé des aliments riches en vitamine A le jour ou la nuit précédents

**Portuguese:** % de crianças com idades entre 6 - 23 meses que consumiram alimentos ricos em vitamina A no dia ou noite anteriores

**Czech:** % dětí ve věku 6-23/59 měsíců, které během uplynulého dne a noci konzumovaly na vitamín A bohatou potravinu

## What is its purpose?

The indicator measures the proportion of children who in the past day or night consumed any vitamin A rich food. It does not measure the quantity. Vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of preventable blindness in children and increases the risk of health and life-threatening diseases and infections. According to WHO, up to 500,000 vitamin A-deficient children become blind every year, half of them die within 12 months of losing their sight.

## How to Collect and Analyse the Required Data

There are **two ways of gaining the required data:**

- > extracting it from your assessment of children's overall dietary diversity
- > assessing the consumption of vitamin A-rich foods only

### A) Extracting the Data from an Overall Dietary Diversity Survey

1) If your survey involves collecting data for [IDDS](#) or [MDD](#) indicators, ensure that all consumed meals are *initially* categorized into the first fourteen food groups listed in FAO's [Guidelines for Measuring Household and Individual Dietary Diversity](#) (page 8). Later, when calculating IDDS or MDD, you can group them into the required 8 (for children aged 6-23 months) or 9 food groups (for children aged 24-59months).

2) Identify the number of children who consumed any of the foods included in the vitamin A-rich food

groups listed in FAO's Guidelines (page 27).

3) To **calculate the indicator's value**, divide the number of children who consumed a vitamin A rich food the previous day or night by the total number of surveyed children. Multiply the result by 100 to convert it to a percentage.

## **B) Assessing the Consumption of Vitamin A Rich Foods Only**

1) Follow the same methodology used by [IDDS](#) for assessing the foods eaten during the previous day or night. However, instead of categorizing the consumed foods into the usual 7 or 9 food groups, use the first fourteen categories listed in [FAO's Guidelines](#) (page 8).

2) If a child consumed any of the foods included in the vitamin A-rich food groups listed in FAO's Guidelines (page 27), s/he can be considered as having "consumed a vitamin A rich food".

3) To **calculate the indicator's value**, divide the number of children who consumed a vitamin A rich food the previous day or night by the total number of surveyed children. Multiply the result by 100 to convert it to a percentage.

## Disaggregate by

[Disaggregate](#) the data by gender, age and [wealth](#).

## Important Comments

1) The data required for this indicator is **prone to seasonal variations**. Do your best to collect baseline and endline data in the same period of a year; otherwise, it is very likely that they will not be comparable.

2) Vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin and therefore needs to be consumed with fat in order to be effectively absorbed. Consider including in your survey questions assessing whether the vitamin A rich foods consumed by the child were eaten with or without fats. For example, *"Was the spinach your child ate prepared with or without any fats or oils?"*

3) This indicator relies on an accurate age assessment. Since people often do not remember the exact dates of their children's birth, the data collectors should **always verify the child's age**. This can be done by reviewing the child's birth certificate, vaccination card or another document; however, since many caregivers do not have such documents (and since they can include mistakes), it is essential that your data collectors are able to **verify the child's age by using local events calendars**. Read FAO's Guidelines (see below) to learn how to prepare local events calendars and how to train data collectors in their correct use.

4) Make sure that you **do not collect data during the fasting periods** (such as pre-Easter or Ramadan) **or during fasting days**.

## Access Additional Guidance

- FAO (2008) [Guidelines for Estimating the Month and Year of Birth of Young Children](#)