

FAQ General 2. What are the principal roles required for ensuring quality nutritional care in Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs)?

Numerous tasks are involved in optimizing nutritional care for EVD patients. Table 1 provides an overview of principal roles and suggested responsibilities for both patient care and the food system components of nutritional care.

Every context will differ, and roles/responsibilities should be carefully adapted to fit the specific set-up, needs, and human resource capacities of any individual ETU. Roles can be combined and responsibilities shifted as needed. Tasks and responsibilities can be divided among clinical staff, EVD survivors/caretakers, nutritionists/dieticians, health support staff, etc. as needed and integrated into various job descriptions.

Regardless of task distribution, all roles must be clearly defined and well communicated to the parties involved. Reporting lines should be well established.

Experience has shown the importance of having a senior person who is accountable for the nutritional care of patients (including food systems-related tasks)¹ – essentially a Nutrition Care Manager. This person can be an experienced nurse or a qualified nutritionist or dietician. It is essential that this individual is part of the clinical team responsible for case management.

All ETU staff have a role in relaying any nutrition-related information or concerns (from patients or based on their own observations) to the Nutrition Care Manager. Table 1 provides an overview of various roles that need to be fulfilled. Depending on the size of the ETU and bed occupancy, some roles can be combined. For example, if the number of patients is limited, the tasks of the Nutrition Supervisor can be either merged with the Nutrition Case Manager or with the Nurse Aid.

Collecting and discarding food and drink leftovers is not included as a task in the table as this should be the responsibility of the infection prevention and control (IPC) or water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) team.

Table 1. Potential roles and responsibilities for ETU nutritional care (adapted²)

Role	Major responsibilities/tasks
Nutrition Care Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages the entire ETU nutritional care system and oversees its quality assurance and control (including regular monitoring) • Is responsible for creating and standardizing locally adapted recipes to meet patient preferences and nutritional requirements (in collaboration with nutrition and catering/kitchen supervisors) • Reviews and signs off on weekly menus • Trains and supervises all staff engaged in nutrition-specific aspects of patient nutritional care • Is the technical focal point concerning contracts with catering services and food suppliers • Trains appropriate ETU health care workers on nutritional assessment, prescribing diets for patients based on illness severity (including level of dehydration), symptoms, level of appetite, and presence or absence of eating difficulties • Ensures a context appropriate for safe and practical food preparation, distribution and consumption • Makes appropriate adjustments to the nutritional care system based on patient and staff feedback and regular monitoring • Is responsible for allocation and stock management of all specialized nutrition food products • Is the technical focal point on feeding of infants <p>Qualifications: Clinical Nutritionist or Dietitian or Nurse with substantial nutrition/food systems experience</p>

Role	Major responsibilities/tasks
Nutrition Supervisor*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervises and/or conducts patient nutritional assessments (in collaboration with Nurse Aides) • Coordinates, reviews, and validates diet prescriptions provided by clinicians from the different ETU zones and monitors daily consumption of patients • Plans, organizes, and coordinates patient meal and snack distribution and feeding plan • Calculates and plans the number of meals and specialized foods provision (in collaboration with the Catering/Kitchen Supervisor) • Assists with creating and standardizing locally adapted recipes • Responsible for creating weekly menus, including calculating and planning number of meals (in collaboration with Catering/Kitchen Supervisor) • Prepares specialized nutritional products for distribution to patients • Supervises and assists with tray assembly preparation and food distribution • Ensures proper application of the standard operating procedures for food brought in by families/friends • Implements the standard operating procedures for newly admitted breastfeeding women
Nurse Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists the Nutrition Supervisor with assessing and monitoring feeding support needs • Organizes and provides feeding support for any patient requiring it (e.g., patients needing assistance with positioning, patients requiring direct feeding support, young children and infants separated from mothers) - with support from EVD caretakers • Assists the Nutrition Supervisor with meal and snack distribution • Monitors food/drink intake of patients and provides feedback to Nutrition Supervisor • Assists Nursing Manager or Supervisor with other tasks as needed • Assists the Nutrition Supervisor with assessing and monitoring nutritional needs (including taking anthropometric measurements to assess nutritional status) and dietary preferences • Assists the Nutrition Supervisor with meal and snack distribution • Assists Nursing Manager or Supervisor with other tasks as needed

Role	Major responsibilities/tasks
Catering/Kitchen Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates and monitors hygienic preparation and packaging of patient meals according to quantity and consistency required following the approved menu plan (catering or in-house preparation) • Liaises with catering services, food suppliers, etc. and handles their contracts • Is responsible for stock management of non-specialized food products and non-food items such as utensils, packaging materials, etc. • Supervises and coordinates quality control checks (in collaboration with IPC/WASH staff) of the in-house kitchen and/or catering service providers • In the context of food insecurity, conducts weekly market surveys on the availability of local ingredients • Assists with creating and standardizing locally adapted recipes • Assists with creating weekly menus, including calculating and planning number of meals • Assists the Nutrition Supervisor at the tray assembly line

*If bed occupancy is relatively small, this role can be merged with the Nutrition Care Manager or Nurse Aid.

References

1. WHO, Ministry of Health DRC, UNICEF (2019). Ebola Nutrition Lesson Learning Workshop – 13th to 16th May 20219, Goma DRC.
2. Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Republic of Liberia. *Guidelines on Nutritional Care and Support for EVD Patients in Treatment Units and Care Centers - A Practical Guide for Implementing Agencies Involved in the Management and Treatment of EVD in Liberia.*; 2014.