

Multiple Micronutrient Supplements for Pregnant Women

A proper intake of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals is necessary to fulfill the increased needs of the mother and fetus during pregnancy. Deficiencies of micronutrients such as Vitamin A, Iron, Iodine and Folate are very common during pregnancy due to insufficient dietary intake of fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy products. These deficiencies can negatively impact the health of a mother, her pregnancy, as well as the health and nutrition of the newborn. According to the National Micronutrient Survey in Bangladesh 2019-2020, 44% of the non-pregnant and non-lactating (NPNL) women had Zinc deficiency, 29% Iodine deficiency, 31% Folate deficiency, and 14% Iron deficiency. Alarming, 71% of NPNL women lacked Vitamin D, 21% Vitamin B12 deficiency, and 30% had mild to severe anemia.

Evidence shows that the provision of Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (MMS) containing 15 essential vitamins and minerals as per United Nations International Multiple Micronutrient Antenatal Preparation (UNIMMAP), has a highly impactful solution compared to Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) for pregnant women to reduce the Low Birth Weight (LBW) and Small for Gestational Age (SGA). The full course of MMS is 180 tablets, one for each day. UNIMMAP formula has resulted in a 12% reduction in LBW and an 8% reduction in SGA in low and middle-income countries. According to the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS, 2022), the prevalence of low birth weight (LBW) among newborns in Bangladesh is 16.2%.

a UK-based philanthropic organization, has assembled a consortium with Social Marketing Company (implementing partner), Global Alliance for Improve Nutrition (policy and prime partner), Sight and Life (technical partner), icddr,b (evaluation partner) and Renata Ltd. (manufacturing partner) to implement a project for reducing LBW in Bangladesh. The objective of the project is to develop a sustainable business model of MMS for pregnant women which will be affordable and accessible to all segments of the population.



Bangladesh has set up the world's 1st and only scaled market-based program for MMS. Launched in July 2021 with the brand name 'FullCare®' in the last 5 year, the program was able to produce UNIMMAP MMS in the country by Renata Ltd. for SMC. *[Renata Ltd. follows the Critical Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) guidelines of the pharmaceutical industry.]*

Ingredients of FullCare®	Amount
Vitamin A	800 mcg RE
Vitamin C	70 mg
Vitamin D	5 mcg (200 IU)
Vitamin E	10 mg α-TE
Vitamin B1	1.4 mg
Vitamin B2	1.4 mg
Vitamin B3	18 mg NE
Vitamin B6	1.9 mg
Folic acid	680 mcg DFE (400 mcg)
Vitamin B12	2.6 mcg
Iron	30 mg
Iodine	150 mcg
Zinc	15 mg
Selenium	65 mcg
Copper	2 mg

In Bangladesh, antenatal care (ANC) service utilization by pregnant women has decreased from 46% (BDHS 2017-18) to 41% (BDHS 2022). The roll out of MMS project provides a unique opportunity to improve ANC and uptake of MMS, impacting pregnancy outcome.

FullCare has been made available to the outlets through its efficient sales forces based in 12 SMC area offices located in strategic places across the country. SMC is selling FullCare through its Blue Star (private sector non-graduate medical health providers), Green Star (private sector non-graduate public health product sellers) networks, Gold Star Members (rural women entrepreneurs) and gradually reaching other pharmacies throughout the country.

SMC monitors and ensures smooth supply chain management of FullCare® Tablets by its live data-based sales reporting system named 'e-Sales/e-DMS' which helps to analyze individual and collective sales performances at any reference period.



Meeting with pregnant women on MMS

SMC is continuously building the capacity of its graduate and non-graduate Star network providers so that they can effectively counsel and provide pregnancy care services as well as increase the utilization of MMS/FullCare® by the pregnant women. Obstetrical and Gynecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB) is engaged to provide training on MMS/ FullCare®, nutrition's and pregnancy care services to the Blue Star and Green Star Providers across the country. SMC is continuously organizing scientific seminars on MMS/FullCare® at District/Upazila level health facilities with graduate Doctors as well as Upazila-level health providers who are offering services to pregnant women. SMC is also supporting healthcare providers with the necessary information, education and communication materials.

Under its Community Mobilization Program, SMC is disseminating FullCare® related information among the potential users through the courtyard and interpersonal communication session. To integrate the MMS 'FullCare®' and Calcium 'Forbon' in the ANC services, SMC has recruited 164 Paramedics and 293 Community Mobilizers into its 161 Community mobilization Upazilas (sub-District). Over 4,500 women entrepreneurs called Gold Star Members are playing important role in distributing FullCare® at the community level.

As a part of sensitization and creating a favorable policy environment to increase the use of 'FullCare®' MMS, SMC organized several TV talk shows on pregnancy care and MMS on renowned National TV Channels.

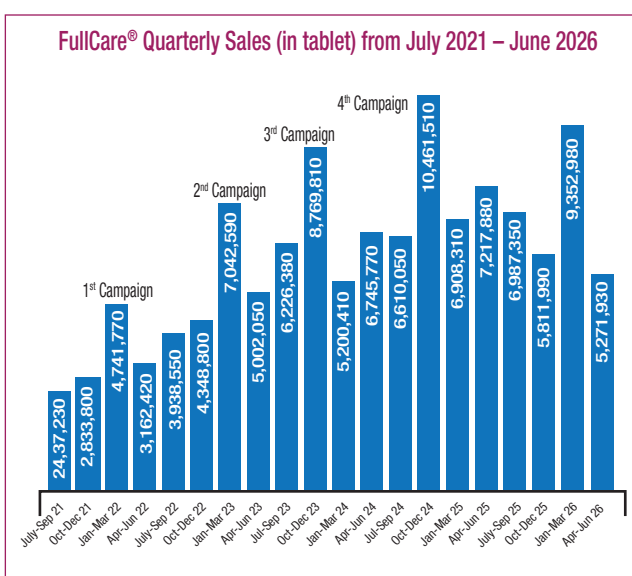
The discussants of the talk shows were mostly the relevant Government officials, members of OGSB and SMC.

SMC also developed an interactive digital interface to follow up the FullCare® users, send several pregnancy care messages and collect feedback from the users. This interface is operated by the SMC's Tele-counseling unit.



SMC organized TV Talk Shows on pregnancy care and MMS

The graph shows quarterly sales of FullCare® in tablets from July 2021 to July 2026. SMC sold around 121.37 million FullCare® tables during this period.



The introduction of FullCare® is one of the important initiatives of SMC as a part of its nutritional life-cycle approach. FullCare® is contributing to reduce the nutritional deficiencies of pregnant women along with their fetuses. SMC is now in the phase of increasing nutritional products as a part of its strategies to improve the nutritional status of different age groups. The company is promoting FullCare® with the slogan 'One FullCare a day, and a healthy baby is on the way.'

For more information

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