

Press Release – Amsterdam, The Netherlands (May 27, 2020)

Nutricia supports new research initiatives to aid COVID-19 patient recovery after hospital discharge

- Patients in Intensive Care Units (ICU) can lose as much as 1 kilogram of muscle mass per dayⁱ. Lengthy stays in intensive care of COVID-19 patients can result in severe loss of muscle mass and patient strength, critically impacting the speed of recovery.
- Nutricia is supporting clinician-led research initiatives in 16 countries around the world via €1 million in funding, to enable nutritional care adapted to the needs of COVID-19 patients leaving ICU.
- Nutricia is also donating medical nutrition products to enable healthcare organizations in 15 countries to provide COVID-19 patients with extra nutritional support immediately upon discharge.

Nutricia, part of world-leading food, beverage and nutrition company Danone, today announces it is supporting research by independent medical professionals to define guidelines for nutritional care for COVID-19 patients recovering after ICU discharge. Beginning with a research project in Italy, over the coming weeks further clinician-initiated research projects in 16 countries around the world will be supported by Nutricia with grants totalling approximately €1 million. Nutricia is also supporting healthcare organizations in different countries through the donation of medical nutrition products enriched with calories and proteins, designed to help patients recovering from a serious illness, such as COVID-19, regain lost weight and strength.

The symptoms, characteristics and treatment options of the COVID-19 disease are becoming increasingly understood as the global pandemic progresses; but the rehabilitation requirements for those who have overcome severe COVID-19 infections in ICU are not yet as widely known. The average duration of stay in ICUs (in the US and Europe) is generally 2 days. However, critically ill COVID-19 patients may be admitted to ICUs for as long as 2 weeks.

ICU patients can lose as much as a kilogram of muscle mass per day^j, and so an elongated stay can result in severe depletion of muscle mass, strength and resilience. Loss of lean body mass can lead to significant effects, including impaired immune function, overall weakness, development of wounds and /or pressure ulcers and even increased mortality ratesⁱⁱ. As a result, people leave the hospital weakened, sometimes hardly able to undergo rehabilitation programmes and unable to perform the activities of daily living like personal hygiene, preparing and eating food or going outside for a walk.

Currently there is limited COVID-19 specific guidance on nutritional care after hospital discharge to address the needs of recovering COVID-19 patients. **Dr. Riccardo Caccialanza, Head of Dietetics and Clinical Nutrition Unit at the IRCCS Policlinico San Matteo Foundation, Pavia (Italy)**, is one of the first medical experts globally to begin research into the impact of nutrition and physical exercise in regaining functional ability and improving quality of life as patients start their recovery from COVID-19 at home. Dr. Caccialanza, who has first-hand experience in overseeing the nutritional care for hospitalized COVID-19 patients, is now signalling the need to continue nutritional support as patients recover after hospital dischargeⁱⁱⁱ. He comments: *“In Italy so far we have seen the complications related to this loss of lean body mass can lead to lengthier patient recovery times – and this requires more resources from already stretched healthcare systems. There is a need for clinical guidance to optimize the recovery of patients and help them regain the ability to perform day-to-day tasks at home. Patients need to have the strength and energy to do those things that matter most to them.”*



Patrick Kamphuis, Senior Medical Affairs Director at Nutricia commented, *“As with many other severe illnesses, discharge from hospital after a COVID-19 infection is only the start of recovery; and unfortunately, the importance of adapted nutrition and exercise in the recovery process is often underestimated. Through these grants for independent research by healthcare professionals, and medical nutrition product donations to healthcare organizations, we hope to contribute to patient recovery from COVID-19 and support healthcare systems across the world in delivering better care outcomes.”*

Nutricia’s COVID-19 support initiatives include ongoing education programs by and for healthcare professionals about the role of nutrition in patient care and recovery, as well as support resources for patients and carers.

Nutricia is part of Danone that has taken radical measures to protect the safety of its employees, support its trading partners as well as strengthen the resilience of its value chain. Danone has provided financial support to partners in its ecosystem such as farmers, suppliers and smaller customers, and has also extended help to healthcare organizations in many countries around the world to address the major health consequences this unprecedented situation creates. This latest support initiative by Nutricia for healthcare professionals is in addition to local aid efforts initiated since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. These have included donation of medical nutrition products or personal protective equipment to healthcare organizations in need of support.

For more information on Nutricia resources for healthcare professionals, carers and patients, please visit www.nutricia.com

ABOUT NUTRICIA

Since 1896, Nutricia has pioneered nutritional solutions that help people live longer, more joyful and healthier lives. Building on more than a century of research and innovation, Nutricia has harnessed the power of life-changing and life-saving nutrition to create a leading specialized nutrition portfolio that can change a health trajectory for life. With its nutritional solutions, Nutricia supports healthy growth and development during the first 1000 days and helps to address some of the world’s biggest health challenges; pre-term birth, faltering growth, food allergy, rare metabolic diseases, age-related conditions and chronic disease, such as frailty, cancer, stroke and early Alzheimer’s disease. As part of Danone, Nutricia embraces the company’s “One Planet. One Health” frame of action reflecting that the health of people and the health of the planet are interconnected. Danone’s ambition to become the first listed company to adopt the ‘Entreprise à Mission’ model created by French law in 2019 is a natural step in the company’s 50-year journey of nourishing its dual economic and social project. This will embed the ‘Entreprise à Mission’ legal framework within its articles of association, and apply a new governance arrangement to oversee the progress of its environmental, social and societal goals, subject to shareholders’ approval at next Annual General Meeting to be held on June 26, 2020.

For more information visit www.nutricia.com

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ⁱⁱ Demling RH. Nutrition, Anabolism, and the Wound Healing Process: An Overview. Journal of Plastic Surgery. 2009;9(e9):65-94

ⁱⁱⁱ Caccialanza R, Laviano A, Lobascio F, et al. Early nutritional supplementation in non-critically ill patients hospitalized for the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Rationale and feasibility of a shared pragmatic protocol. Nutrition. 2020; 74:110835

