

Malnutrition

What is malnutrition?

Malnutrition occurs when person do not get enough calories or nutrients to keep himself healthy. Nutrients include protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals.

Risk factors

- Not eating the right amount or kinds of food
- Inability to digest and absorb nutrients properly
- A health condition that increases the amount of calories your body needs
- Pregnancy
- Eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia
- Drug or alcohol abuse

Signs and symptoms

- Irritable (bad mood) and tired
- Slower growth than normal, or no growth (in children)
- Weight loss or loss of appetite
- Slow wound healing and an increase in infections
- Bone or joint pain, weak muscles, or sunken temples
- Brittle and spooned nails
- Dry, scaly skin or change in skin color
- Change of hair color, or hair loss
- Bloated abdomen and swelling in other parts of the body

Diagnosis

- body mass index (BMI)
- unintentionally lost weight in recent months

Treatment

- Treatment depends on what caused malnutrition.
- Increased calories and nutrients will be needed. A dietitian may help to plan larger, healthy meals. If person have trouble eating larger meals, eat small meals throughout the day. Person may need to eat or drink a nutrition supplement.
- Vitamins and minerals may be needed to replace vitamins and minerals body needs. They may be given through IV, as a shot, or as a pill.
- Appetite stimulants are given that help improve appetite.

Clinical teaching

Person should have

- Bread, rice, potatoes, and other starchy foods. This forms the largest portion of the diet and provides calories for energy and carbohydrates that are converted to sugars which provide energy.
- Milk and dairy foods – Vital sources of fats and simple sugars like lactose as well as minerals like Calcium

- Fruit and vegetables – Vital sources of vitamins and minerals as well as fiber and roughage for better digestive health
- Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein – These form the building blocks of the body and help in numerous body and enzyme functions.

Reference: Micromedex's Care Notes System Online 2.0