

prevent childhood GI diseases.

Poor skin integrity further increases the chance of infections, hypothermia, water loss, and skin breakdown. Tube feedings may be required for infants too weak to breastfeed or bottle feed. Oral rehydration with an approved oral rehydration solution is commonly used in cases of SAM in which diarrhea and infection are not immediately life threatening.

One approach that has gained acceptance for treating childhood malnutrition in developing countries is the use of **ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF)**. RUTF is a paste based on peanuts, powdered milk, sugar, and vegetable oil; it requires no mixing with water or milk. The packaged RUTF can be stored without refrigeration. Studies have demonstrated improved survival rates in malnourished children (Amthor, Cole, and Manary, 2009; Park, Kim, Ouma, et al, 2012). Some of the reported advantages of home-based (community-based) treatment include that children are not exposed to hospital-acquired infections and may receive the RUTF from village health aides (Park, Kim, Ouma, et al, 2012).

It is imperative that nurses be at the forefront in educating and reinforcing healthy nutrition habits in parents of small children to prevent malnutrition. Because children with marasmus may experience emotional starvation as well, care should be consistent with care of children with failure to thrive (later in this chapter).

The World Health Organization has published guidelines for the dietary treatment and management of children with severe malnutrition; these guidelines are available at http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/95584/1/9789241506328_engua=1. These guidelines provide a summary of the evidence along with specific recommendations regarding the care of infants and children with SAM.

Health Problems Related to Nutrition

Food Sensitivity

In 2010, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, working with 34 other professional organizations, published new evidence-based guidelines for the diagnosis and management of food allergy. A **food allergy** is defined by the National Institute of