ects of Malnutrition on Children

Children suffering malnutrition can develop ailments, disorders and diseases that may affect them for the rest of their lives.

Short-Term Implications

* **Immune System:**When children suffer from malnutrition, they also suffer from a weakened immune system. Because of this, they have an increased risk of developing infections or contracting contagious diseases. If their living conditions are unsanitary, they are more apt to get infections from others in the home. These children tend to have a deficiency in vitamin A, zinc and iron.
* **Poor Growth:**When children do not receive a sufficient amount of nutrients while they are growing, they may suffer from growth retardation. Because they are malnourished, they have a greater chance of getting gastrointestinal infections. This can make their condition even worse because while they are not getting enough nutrients, they also cannot properly absorb the ones that they do get.

Long-Term Implications

* **Poor Growth:**Long term growth complications can arise because of deficiencies in vitamins A and D, magnesium, zinc, magnesium and iron. This can lead to disorders like anorexia or a protein deficiency resulting in poor bone development. If they remain in their current living conditions and do not receive proper nutrients, they will never be able to recover to their full growth potential. Often these children suffer from stunted height.
* **Brain Development:**If a child is malnourished, the brain is negatively affected and can suffer from insufficient development. This can result in ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), learning disabilities, low IQ scores, poor language development, memory and focus problems, low problem-solving and weakened school performance.

Treating Malnourished Children

If caught early enough, several of the effects of malnutrition can be reversed. This is especially so if the situation was only short term.

A child suspected of being malnourished should be evaluated by a doctor. The doctor will be able to conduct a physical exam and check for underlying conditions that lead to malnutrition. He will ask questions about the child's diet and eating habits. In addition, the doctor may also order blood tests, measure the child's body mass index, check height and weight and order other tests as deemed necessary.

If an underlying condition is causing the child's condition, the doctor will recommend ways to help combat the malnutrition, which may include a referral to a specialist. If the problem lies with the amount and type of food the child eats, a dietitian will come up with a food plan and may recommend vitamin and mineral supplements.

Prevention

The best way to treat malnutrition is to prevent it from occurring in the first place. A balanced diet is needed to maintain good health. Consumption of a variety of foods will help you accomplish this goal. The food groups in a healthy diet include

What are the signs of malnutrition in children?

* Rapid weight loss.
* Low appetite.
* Chronic fatigue and weakness.
* A child who is significantly smaller and shorter than would be expected for their age and sex.
* Being more vulnerable to opportunistic infections,characterized by getting sick often.
* Bleeding gums.
* Swollen abdomens.
* Skin rashes and easy bruising.
* Achy joints and muscles.
* Sensitivity to light.

[Malnutrition – Sympt](https://r.search.yahoo.com/_ylt=A0geK.cfAnli_pAAE4tXNyoA;_ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZANMT0NVSTAzOF8xBHNlYwNzYw--/RV=2/RE=1652126368/RO=10/RU=https%3a%2f%2fwww.timesnownews.com%2fhealth%2farticle%2fworried-about-your-child-eating-empty-calories-warning-signs-of-malnutrition-in-kids-to-look-out-for%2f840885/RK=2/RS=B2ZYriVy23XMTEODgmyrCs8VO3o-" \t "_blank)

**Prevention of malnutrition**

Generally, malnutrition is caused by lack of nutritional components i.e carbohydrates, protein etc. It can be prevented by providing a special diet with sufficient amount timely

**1: Breastfeeding**

The rate of malnutrition can be reduced by breastfeeding**,** but mothers are sometimes are ill-advised to not breastfeed their children. Breastfeeding has been shown to reduce mortality in infants and young children’s. Breastfeeding in first two years and exclusively breastfeeding in the first six months could save 1.3 million children’s life education programs could have large impacts on the malnourished children rate.

**2: Fortified food**

Manufacturing is trying to fortify everyday foods with micronutrients that can be sold to consumer For example flour has been fortified with iron, zinc, folic acid and other B vitamins such as thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and Vitamin B12. The death rate of offsprings during infancy and early childhood is reduced to about 29% by the intake of iodine supplements in pregnant women. However, universal salt iodization has largely replaced this intervention. So this food can also help in preventing the malnutrition.

**3: Health Facilities**

One of the causes of Nutrition disorder is an insufficient intake of food or of certain nutrition by an inability of the body to absorb and use nutrition’s or by overconsumption of certain foods. Some examples include obesity caused by excess energy intake; anemia caused by the deficiency of iron. We should increase access of people to health facilities in rural parts of the world. These facilities could monitor malnourished children, act as additive food distribution centers and provide education on dietary importance or need.

**4: Healthy foods**

Specific protein diet contains eggs, milk. Consume plenty of fruits, grains, and vegetables. Eat a variety of foods that are low in fats and cholesterols and contain only moderate amounts of salt, sugar, and sodium. Use of drug and alcohol should be avoided. Maintain the body weight of children’s.

**5: Nutritional Education**

Promote health education to mothers about good nutrition and food hygiene. Give good family environment, a measure to improve family diet. Promote breastfeeding and encourage the mothers to feed their child. Make sure that mother follows the prescribed rules for their child health.

**6: Nutritional rehabilitation services**

Every patient admitted to a hospital should be analyzed for the presence of illnesses that could lead to protein-energy malnutrition.  Diagnose and treatment of infection including diarrhea. Developing supplementary feeding program during epidemics. Develop the program for early dehydration of children with diarrhea and other nutritional illness.

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