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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/malnutrition.html>

Malnutrition

Food provides the energy and nutrients you need to be healthy. If you don't get enough nutrients -- including proteins [<https://medlineplus.gov/dietaryproteins.html>] , carbohydrates [<https://medlineplus.gov/carbohydrates.html>] , fats [<https://medlineplus.gov/dietaryfats.html>] , vitamins [<https://medlineplus.gov/vitamins.html>] , and minerals [<https://medlineplus.gov/minerals.html>] - you may suffer from malnutrition.

Causes of malnutrition include:




- Lack of specific nutrients in your diet. Even the lack of one vitamin can lead to malnutrition.
- An unbalanced diet
- Certain medical problems, such as malabsorption syndromes [<https://medlineplus.gov/malabsorptionsyndromes.html>] and cancers

Symptoms may include fatigue, dizziness, and weight loss. Or, you may have no symptoms. To diagnose the cause of the problem, your doctor may do blood tests and a nutritional assessment. Treatment may include replacing the missing nutrients and treating the underlying cause.


Start Here

- Undernutrition [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/disorders-of-nutrition/undernutrition/undernutrition>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/trastornos-nutricionales/desnutrici%C3%B3n/desnutrici%C3%B3n>]
- What is Malnutrition? [<https://www.eatright.org/health/health-conditions/malnutrition-and-deficiencies/what-is-malnutrition>] (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics)

Diagnosis and Tests

- Albumin Blood Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/albumin-blood-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-albumina-en-la-sangre/>]
- Chymotrypsin in Stool [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/chymotrypsin-in-stool/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/quimotripsina-en-heces/>]
- Prealbumin Blood Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/prealbumin-blood-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-sangre-de-prealbumina/>]

Related Issues


- Vitamin B12-Deficiency Anemia [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/anemia/vitamin-b12-deficiency-anemia>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/anemia/anemia-por-deficiencia-de-vitamina-b12>]
- Vitamin Deficiency Anemia [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/vitamin-deficiency-anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355025?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/vitamin-deficiency-anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355025?p=1>]

Weight Changes, Malnutrition, and Cancer [<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/appetite-loss>]

 (National Cancer Institute)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/tratamiento/efectos-secundarios/perdida-apetito>]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Malnutrition [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Malnutrition%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]
 (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Efficacy of long-term oral nutritional supplementation with dietary counseling on growth,...
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40660276>]
- Article: Nutritional deficiencies after sleeve gastrectomy and Roux-en-Y gastric bypass at 10...
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40613787>]
- Article: Improving nutritional status and health outcomes in school-going adolescents: a randomized...
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40606081>]
- Malnutrition -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Malnutrition%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [<https://www.cdc.gov/>]
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/>]

Children

- Failure to Thrive (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/failure-thrive.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/failure-thrive.html>]

Older Adults

- Preventing Malnutrition in Older Adults [<https://familydoctor.org/preventing-malnutrition-in-older-adults/?adfree=true>]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/como-prevenir-la-desnutricion-en-adultos-de-edad-avanzada/?adfree=true>]

Patient Handouts

- Beriberi [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000339.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000339.htm>]
- Kwashiorkor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001604.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001604.htm>]
- Malnutrition [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000404.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000404.htm>]
- Pellagra [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000342.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000342.htm>]
- Pica [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001538.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001538.htm>]
- Scurvy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000355.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000355.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Beriberi [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000339.htm>]

Kwashiorkor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001604.htm>]

Malnutrition [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000404.htm>]

Pellagra [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000342.htm>]

Phosphorus blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003478.htm>]

Pica [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001538.htm>]

Protein electrophoresis - serum [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003540.htm>]

Scurvy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000355.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Body Weight [<https://medlineplus.gov/bodyweight.html>]

Child Nutrition [<https://medlineplus.gov/childnutrition.html>]

Infant and Newborn Nutrition [<https://medlineplus.gov/infantandnewbornnutrition.html>]

Malabsorption Syndromes [<https://medlineplus.gov/malabsorptionsyndromes.html>]

Minerals [<https://medlineplus.gov/minerals.html>]

Nutrition [<https://medlineplus.gov/nutrition.html>]

Nutrition for Older Adults [<https://medlineplus.gov/nutritionforolderadults.html>]

Vitamin D Deficiency [<https://medlineplus.gov/vitamindeficiency.html>]

Vitamins [<https://medlineplus.gov/vitamins.html>]

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