

MALNUTRITION

Have you been eating less than usual?

Have you lost weight without meaning to?

Do you have a reduced appetite?



What is malnutrition?

- **Malnutrition occurs when a person does not consume enough energy (calories/kilojoules) and/or protein for their body's needs.**
- **Malnutrition can happen to anyone** regardless of usual body size.
- **Malnutrition commonly occurs when food intake is less than usual, nutritional needs increase and/or when illness negatively impacts absorption of nutrients by the body.**
- If there is **any unplanned weight loss**, especially if rapid, a person should seek healthcare professional advice as they may have, or are at-risk of, malnutrition.

Who is at risk?

The following factors can put people at higher risk of developing malnutrition:

- Aged 65 years and over
- Cancers
- Chewing/swallowing problems
- Dementia
- Depression
- Hospital admission
- Inability to shop, cook or feed themselves
- Social isolation
- Surgery

Malnutrition can lead to...

- Higher infection risk
- Increased falls
- Longer hospital stays
- Loss of strength
- Poor immunity
- Reduced ability to do usual daily activities
- Reduced quality of life
- Shorter life expectancy

Eat to beat malnutrition

A dietitian can help you make changes to your diet to increase your protein and energy intake.

This might include:

- Eating smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day
- When your appetite is good, make the most of the food you eat by choosing foods high in protein and energy
- Follow a high protein high energy diet
 - Include protein at every meal e.g. chicken, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts
 - Choose nourishing drinks e.g. milk, smoothies
 - Enjoy dairy foods regularly (milk, yoghurt and cheese)
- Use oral nutritional supplements when necessary

