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MINUTE

ON

UNDERSTANDING ADULT MALNUTRITION

Malnutrition is a serious condition that occurs when a person's diet does not contain enough nutrients to meet the demands of their body.

Anybody can be affected by malnutrition. The elderly or those with certain medical conditions are generally more at risk of becoming malnourished.

RISK FACTORS

Difficulties in chewing or swallowing, managing certain chronic diseases and their treatment plans, social isolation, following a restrictive diet and being in a nursing home are all potential factors that could increase your risk of becoming malnourished.

There are several levels of severity, from no risk to high risk of becoming malnourished. The first sign is usually unintentional weight loss with a minimum loss of approximately 5% of weight over a month or 10% unintentional weight loss in 6 months¹.

The impact of this could result² in: decreased energy for routine activities, muscle loss and it can also impact the immune system, among other things. All of this can lead to a reduced quality of life.

Malnutrition has a very significant impact on health costs. It can lead to an increase in the length of stay in hospital, and consequently to an increase in costs³. It constitutes a serious public health issue.

For information about relevant international standards, see the ISDI brochure on Foods for Special Medical Purposes (FSMP): <https://www.isdi.org/fsmp-brochure/>

1. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/malnutrition/>

2. Better care through better nutrition: Value and effects of Medical Nutrition. Medical Nutrition International. https://www.medicalnutritionindustry.com/files/user_upload/documents/medical_nutrition/2018_MNI_Dossier_Final_web.pdf

3. Khalatbari-Soltani S, Marques-Vidal P. The economic cost of hospital malnutrition in Europe; a narrative review. Clin Nutr ESPEN. 2015 Jun;10(3):e89-e94. doi: 10.1016/j.clnesp.2015.04.003.