

Eating to Meet Your Body's Needs



Malnutrition can happen to anyone, at any body size. You can become malnourished over time if you don't eat enough of the right foods – especially protein – or enough calories to meet your body's needs. This can have a serious impact on your health and medical care.

Malnutrition can affect your health and life

- Malnutrition shrinks your muscles, which makes it harder to walk, function and stay independent.
- It weakens your immune system's ability to fight off illness and infections.
- It impairs wound healing.
- It affects your ability to tolerate and recover from surgery and medical treatments. Learn more about *Eating to Optimize Surgery or Treatment* at **bit.ly/SUANutrition**.

Who is at risk of malnutrition?

- Anyone, at any weight, who doesn't eat enough protein, calories or nutrients to meet his or her body's needs
- Adults over 65 with a body mass index below 23 (considered normal for younger people, but underweight for older people) – find out what your BMI is at **www.bmi-calculator.net**
- Anyone, whether underweight or obese, who is going through a serious illness, surgery or major trauma – learn more about *Eating to Optimize Surgery or Treatment* at **bit.ly/SUANutrition**
- People on rapid-weight-loss diets

Could you be at risk?

Take a quick self-assessment at www.mna-elderly.com to find out.

Ask your doctor about malnutrition if your self-assessment says you may be at risk, or if:

- You have recently lost weight without trying
- You've lost your appetite lately
- You're unable to eat or are only able to eat small amounts
- You're feeling weak or tired
- You have problems with swelling or fluid accumulation

Prevent malnutrition: Eat to meet your body's needs

- Eat from all of the food groups: Protein, dairy, vegetables, grains and fruits. Learn more about *Eating for Your Best Health* under Educational Materials at www.healthoregon.org/sharedmeals.
- Eat 3 to 4 ounces of protein (20 to 30 grams) at every meal to build and repair your muscles. Get more *Protein Pointers* at bit.ly/SUANutrition
- Use the Super Tracker and other tools at www.choosemyplate.gov to help you plan your meals.

If you have questions about what to eat, how to eat or whether you are eating enough, ask your doctor for a referral to a registered dietitian.

This information is for general educational purposes only – always follow your doctor's recommendations, and check with your doctor if you have any questions.