

Malnutrition

Malnutrition is characterized by inadequate or excessive nutrient intake, an unbalanced intake of vital nutrients, or poor nutrient use. Undernutrition, overweight, and obesity are part of the double burden of malnutrition, as are noncommunicable diseases connected to diet. The largest risk groups for malnutrition include women, newborns, kids, and teenagers. Malnutrition dangers and risks from it are increased in poverty. Different types of malnutrition are more likely to harm those who are poor. Malnutrition can feed a cycle of poverty and illness by raising healthcare expenses, decreasing productivity, and slowing economic growth.

Four general signs of undernutrition include

- stunting,
- wasting,
- being underweight,
- micronutrient deficiencies

Types of Malnutrition

A series of disorders known as malnutrition affects both children and adults and is typically brought on by inadequate nutrient intake, absorption, or use. Malnutrition mostly comes in two forms:

- Protein-energy malnutrition: caused by a lack of any one or more nutrients
- Micronutrient deficiency diseases: caused by a lack of certain micronutrients

There are three types of protein-energy malnutrition in children, namely:

Type	Appearance	Cost
Chronic malnutrition	Stunting or shortness	long-term inadequate nutrition resulting in lack of linear growth
Acute malnutrition	Wasting or thinness	acute malnutrition resulting in fast weight loss or abnormal weight increase

Acute and chronic malnutrition	Underweight,	It is a composite measure that may result from stunting, wasting or both.
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Malnutrition comes in many different ways, including stunting and wasting. The causes of stunting, a chronic condition, are not well known.

- Stunting is relatively frequent among communities in less developed nations and does not pose an immediate threat to life. Not that it is insignificant, but it is less vital than waste in times of humanitarian need.
- A severe lack of food causes wasting, can be reversed with refeeding, and has a high death rate.
- Waste is the most urgent type of malnutrition in humanitarian circumstances because of these factors.

Causes of Malnutrition

There are several causes of malnutrition. These probable causes are described in the sections below:

- **Low food intake:** Some persons experience malnutrition due to a lack of food or trouble swallowing or absorbing nutrients.
- **Mental health conditions:** Undernutrition or malnutrition can impact people with dementias, schizophrenia, depression or anorexia nervosa.
- **Social and mobility issues:** These issues, such as being unable to leave the house or go to a store to buy food or finding it physically difficult to prepare meals, can influence a person's eating patterns and perhaps cause malnutrition.
- **Digestive problems and stomach ailments:** Malnutrition may still occur even with a healthy diet if the body cannot absorb nutrients effectively.
- **Alcohol use disorder:** Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol might cause gastritis or permanent pancreatic damage.

Malnutrition in India

Economic disparity is one of the main factors contributing to malnutrition in India. Their diet frequently lacks quality and quantity due to the low economic condition of various population segments. Babies born to malnourished

women are less likely to be healthy. Long-term harm is caused by nutritional deficits to both individuals and society.

According to World Bank statistics, India is one of the nations with the greatest percentage of malnourished children worldwide.

- India is pitifully low 107th out of 121 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2022 study.
- According to research by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), malnutrition in children was the main cause of under-five-year-old deaths in India.
- According to a UNICEF report, 38% of Indian children under five have stunted growth.
- Children from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribe, and Other Backward Classes are stunted in about 40% of cases.
- The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimates that 14.5% of Indians are undernourished.

Malnutrition in India: Schemes Launched by the Indian Government

Due to India's high malnutrition rate, the Indian government has introduced several programs to combat the issue. The Government of India's programs to combat malnutrition are provided below.

National Nutrition Policy

- Under the direction of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the National Nutrition Policy (NNP) was enacted in 1993.
- The NNP's multi-sectoral approach to promoting optimal nutrition for everyone and eliminating malnutrition.

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme

- The programme offers focused interventions for women and children under the age of six, among other vulnerable groups.
- The six services it offers are supplemental nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, nutrition & health education, immunisation, health check-ups, and referral services.
- It is being administered by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Mid Day Meal Scheme

- It began as a centrally sponsored scheme in 1995.
- The Department of School Education and Literacy is in charge of the Mid Day Meal Program within the Education Ministry.
- Every kid who enrolls and attends the school between the ages of six and fourteen and is enrolled in classes I through VIII is entitled to a free hot lunch every day, excluding school holidays.

National Health Mission (NHM)

- The National Rural Health Mission and the National Urban Health Mission were merged into the National Health Mission (NHM), which was introduced by the Indian government in 2013.
- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare is carrying it out.
- Strengthening the health systems for reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health (RMNCH+A), as well as communicable and non-communicable diseases, is one of the primary programme components.

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna (IGMSY)

- By offering economic incentives for better health and nutrition to expectant and nursing moms, the programme seeks to contribute to a more enabling environment.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is carrying it out.

National Nutrition Mission

- This mission, also known as POSHAN Abhiyaan, aims to decrease anaemia by 3%, low birth weight by 2%, and undernutrition by 2%.
- By 2022, this initiative hopes to eradicate malnutrition in India. The goal is to bring the population's percentage of stunted children down to 25% by 2022.
- Children, teenagers, and breastfeeding moms are the mission's target demographics.