**MALNUTRITION**

**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?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The following factors can put people at higher risk of developing malnutrition:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aged 65 years and over</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cancers</td>
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<td>Chewing/swallowing problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dementia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital admission</td>
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<td>Inability to shop, cook or feed themselves</td>
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<td>Social isolation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surgery</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**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

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