

Am I malnourished?

You might be surprised to learn that up to **40% of hospital patients are thought to be malnourished**. While malnutrition is often thought of as something that only affects the elderly, it can come in many shapes and sizes, sometimes affecting the most unlikely of people – so even if you think you're ok, it's worth reading on.

Malnutrition occurs when a person **does not consume enough energy (calories/ kilojoules) or protein for their body's needs**. This may be due to increased nutritional requirements of being unwell or not eating enough.

Identifying malnutrition early and treating it quickly is crucial in avoiding poor outcomes such as:

- Muscle wasting
- Loss of strength and function
- Reduced immunity
- Extended hospital stays
- Reduced life expectancy

So, how do you know if you're malnourished?

Ask yourself the following questions...

Have you been eating less than usual?

Do you have a reduced appetite?

Have you lost weight without meaning to?

Have you had to tighten your belt buckle recently?

Is your face looking drawn?

Have your family or friends recently told you that you look like you've lost weight?

Are your clothes or jewellery becoming loose?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, you should flag it with your doctor or nurse who can refer you to a dietitian. Your dietitian will be able to assess your current nutritional status and make personalised recommendations to ensure you are well nourished.

Malnutrition Week ANZ #MalnutritionWeekANZ

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