

Malnourishment

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Malnutrition refers to getting too little or too much of certain nutrients. It can lead to serious health issues, including stunted growth, eye problems, diabetes and heart disease. Malnutrition affects billions of people worldwide. Some populations have a high risk of developing certain types of malnutrition **depending on their environment, lifestyle and resources.**

Types of Malnutrition

The term malnutrition addresses 3 broad groups of conditions:

- **undernutrition**, which includes **wasting (low weight-for-height), stunting (low height-for-age) and underweight (low weight-for-age)**;
- **micronutrient-related malnutrition**, which includes micronutrient deficiencies (a lack of important vitamins and minerals) or micronutrient excess; and
- **overweight, obesity and diet-related noncommunicable diseases** (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers).

Undernutrition

Wasting usually indicates **recent and severe weight loss**, because a person has not had enough food to eat and/ or they have had an infectious disease, such as diarrhoea, which has caused them to lose weight.

Stunting is the result of chronic or **recurrent undernutrition, usually associated with poor socioeconomic conditions**, poor maternal health and nutrition, frequent illness, and/ or inappropriate infant and young child feeding and care in early life.

Inadequacies in intake of vitamins and minerals often referred

to as micronutrients, can also be grouped together as micronutrient related malnutrition. Micronutrients enable the body to produce enzymes, hormones, and other substances that are essential for proper growth and development.

Malnutrition in India

India experiences a malnutrition burden among its under-five population. As of 2015, the national prevalence of **under-five overweight is 2.4%**, which has increased slightly from 1.9% in 2006. The national prevalence of **under-five stunting is 37.9%**, which is **greater than the developing country average of 25%**. India's **under-five wasting prevalence of 20.8%** is also **greater than the developing country average of 8.9%**. India's adult population also face a malnutrition burden. **51.4% of women of reproductive age have anaemia, and 9.1% of adult men have diabetes, compared to 8.3% of women.** Meanwhile, 5.1% of women and 2.7% of men have obesity.