



Under Nutrition / Malnutrition

What is under nutrition / malnutrition?

The term under nutrition may be taken to mean ‘bad’ or ‘faulty’ nutrition (Including overweight and Underweight). Disease related under nutrition ‘is a state of nutrient deficiency which produces a change in body function and is associated with longer hospital stays and greater risk of infections. To stay healthy, a balanced diet is required – i.e. one which provides adequate Energy (kcal), and nutrients (protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and fluids).

How common is disease-related malnutrition in Ireland?

There are low rates in the general healthy adult population (under 65’s), however there are higher rates in older patients with chronic disease. It is estimated that more than 1 in 10 patients in hospital setting are malnourished with much more developing malnutrition during their hospitalisation. However most malnutrition in a country exists in the community setting i.e. older persons living in there own homes and in long term residential care.

Am I malnourished?

If you suffer from any of the following symptoms you may be at risk of malnutrition:

- ◆ Poor appetite/disinterest in food .
- ◆ History of decreased intake/poor appetite, portion sizes changed.
- ◆ Altered taste/smell.
- ◆ Change in food preferences / avoiding food e.g. meat
- ◆ Obvious thin/ Wasted appearance
- ◆ Weight Loss

What type of diet is typically recommended for a malnourished patient?

When a patient is identified as being malnourished a high calorie diet is recommended (Often called high protein high energy diet), and is used in conjunction with food fortification. A high calorie diet is designed to provide a person with a regular intake of foods that are high in both calories and protein. This type of diet can help to: improve appetite and well being, heal wounds, maintain or increase weight and promote growth, thus optimising a person’s nutritional status. Your doctor or dietitian may recommend nutritional supplements if they believe this will help your condition.

To make an appointment with the dietitian please contact the number below:

Bon Secours Dietetic Department: Tel 01-8065488 Email: nutrition@dublin.bonsecours.ie