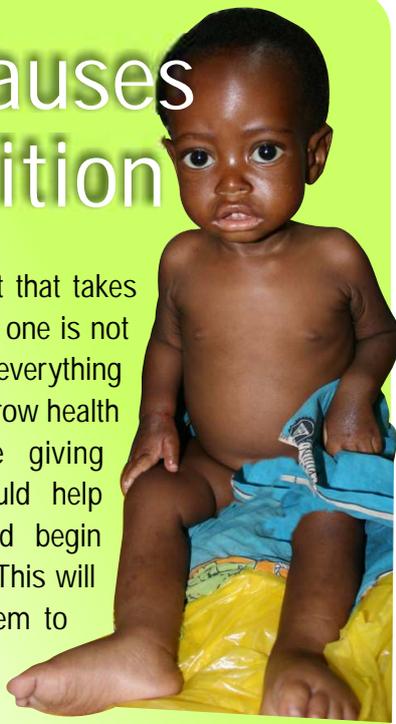


What Causes Malnutrition



Malnutrition is the effect that takes place on the body when one is not eating foods that have everything that the body needs to grow health and strong. Therefore giving babies foods that would help them grow well should begin immediately after birth. This will make it possible for them to grow into healthy adults.

Not giving the baby enough breast milk

Breast milk only is enough to provide all the food and water the baby needs to grow well before the age of six months. It protects the baby from malnutrition. The baby's stomach is not yet ready to eat other foods, therefore giving the baby porridge and other foods before six months will put the baby at risk of getting diarrhea and other diseases that could result in malnutrition.

Poor Feeding After 6 Months

After six months the children become more at risk of malnutrition because they start to crawl and put things in the mouths which may be dirty and have germs on them and could cause diarrhea and other diseases. If a child who is six months and above is not given different types of food and continues to breast feed the baby may stop growing well.

Diseases and other causes

Worms reduce a child's appetite. The child may eat less food than usual and therefore the body will not get all the food needed to grow well. Sores in the mouth may make eating difficult, while diarrhea may make the child lose all the food they eat. A sick child needs to eat well to fight the diseases and grow well. Children who are sick need to be encouraged to eat a lot more food in order to recover quickly. Give the child soft foods if they are finding it hard to eat. Wash your hands

with soap and water before touching food, after changing the baby's nappy and after using the toilet. Clean well all pots, pans and plates used to cook and store food. Teach your child to wash hands regularly too.

Poor Child Care

When a child is not helped or encouraged to eat they may become malnourished. Children need special care especially when they are sick or still too young to eat on their own. It is also important to put them on the mat or clean sack or tent to play to make sure that they don't pick up dirty things and soil to put in their mouths. This will help prevent them from diarrhea and malnutrition.

Poor Maternal Nutrition

When a woman does not eat different types of food she may develop malnutrition. Pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers need to eat different kinds of foods to be healthy and help their babies grow well. When a woman does not eat well during pregnancy the baby may be born with a low birth weight.

Husbands, families and the communities need to help pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers eat different types of food by making sure that the food is available for them to eat. These foods may include eggs, green vegetables, beans, groundnuts or milk.

Pregnant women should also be encouraged to take the iron tablets given to them at the health centers.

Poor Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

Children who drink unsafe water and those who play in dirty surroundings are at risk of getting malnutrition. Dirty surroundings and unsafe water contain germs that can cause diseases like diarrhea. To prevent this boil or add chlorine to the child's drinking water. Make sure your child plays on a mat or clean sack so that they don't put things in their mouths.

