

### About the Message Library

People affected by disaster must have access to timely, appropriate and accurate information to help them keep themselves and their families safe and well. They should know their rights, entitlements and be able to give feedback. Responders have a duty to put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms to ensure this.

Our Message Library offers clear, concise and simple messages on a range of topics as templates for you to adapt and use in the context you are working in. These are intended to help you make a quick start on communicating with communities while you further develop mechanisms for on-going dialogue with diverse groups within each community.

For help contextualising and using the messages we recommend you do our e-learning course and read the following technical guidance.

#### E-learning

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=768>

#### Guidance

<https://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-guidance/cdac-message-library-user-guidance>

# MALNUTRITION: MESSAGES

LAST UPDATE: MARCH 2022

## CHILD PROTECTION

### Why is Vit A important for women who've just given birth?

Vitamin A (Vit A) is essential for keeping the body and its immune system healthy. This is especially important for women who've just given birth. Vit A is given to mothers as part of essential health care provided at the clinic after delivery. Go to your nearest clinic to get Vitamin A.

### Signs of malnutrition in children

Young girls and boys should grow and put on weight regularly. If your child has lost their appetite or has lost a lot of weight, is not gaining weight and / or growing, he/she may be malnourished.

### Consequences of malnutrition in children

If your child is severely malnourished they are also more at risk of catching life-threatening, childhood illnesses such as diarrhoea and pneumonia.

## INFORMATION

### How to cook food to make it safe

If you do not know how to cook food or prepare it in an unhygienic way, your family could either go hungry or fall sick. Cook food thoroughly to prevent diarrhoea particularly fish and meat and eat cooked food immediately. If reheating cooked food, reheat until steaming hot. When cooking meat and poultry, make sure their juices run clear and no parts of the meat should be red or pink. It is now safe to eat.

### Symptoms (of Oedema)

If your child has puffy, swollen feet, legs or face they may be severely malnourished. Take your child to your nearest health facility immediately.

### Why are iron-rich foods important

Children need iron-rich foods to protect their physical and mental abilities and to prevent anaemia.

### Sources of Vitamin A

Vitamin A can be found in breastmilk, fruit and vegetables, red palm oil, eggs, dairy products, liver, fish, meat and foods with added vitamins.

### Sources of iron rich foods

The best sources of iron are animal sources, such as liver, lean meats and fish.

### Why is Vit A important in emergencies?

In emergency situations, it is often hard to get foods that are rich in vitamin A. In overcrowded conditions, you are more likely to catch dangerous diseases such as measles, pneumonia and diarrhoea. By taking Vitamin A, you are helping to prevent and treat you / and your child(ren) from getting ill or from catching infectious diseases.

### How to use ready to use therapeutic food and side effects

The special food distributed at feeding centers for your child (RUTF) will make them thirsty. Always offer your child plenty of breastmilk or clean water to drink while eating RUTF. Feed the child little and often. Do not give other foods unless advised to do so by a healthworker. RUTF may also cause mild diarrhoea which is normal due to change in diet but if it persists bring the child back to the health clinic.

### Treatment

If your child is confirmed with malnutrition your child will be given specific treatment and drugs called ready to eat therapeutic food (RUTF) at nutrition treatment centres. This should not be shared. If you have been given RUTF from a nutrition treatment centre for your child, follow the advice of the health worker. Give small regular meals of RUTF and encourage the child to eat often. Sick children often don't want to eat.

### Consequences of malnutrition in adults

If you are malnourished, you are less likely to cope with infection and more likely to catch dangerous diseases such as malaria, measles, diarrhoeal disease, pneumonia, HIV and AIDS.

### Causes of malnutrition

Not enough food, not enough variety of foods, poor hygiene or illness can cause malnutrition.

## OLDER PEOPLE

### Availability of assistance

Help isolated older people who may be malnourished access the centres so that they can receive their food rations. Supplementary feeding programmes have been set up by [insert info here] at [insert info].

### Consequences for older people

Malnourished older people have less resistance to diseases such as chest infections. Malnourished older people are also weaker mentally and physically and can find it hard to take care of themselves.

## Signs of malnutrition in older people

If the older person in your family is getting thin and weak, does not eat much and has no appetite, s/he could be malnourished.

## SERVICES

### Location of support services

For help and advice on cooking and food distribution and how to care for young children, you can get support at [insert details].

### Location

Food rations with micronutrients will be distributed for pregnant and lactating women and children under five at [insert info here] on [insert info].

### Procedure and criteria

Vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women and children under five will be given micronutrients in their food rations. These will make them healthier and less likely to catch disease.

### Information on iron supplementation

Supplements containing iron are being distributed at [insert info] on [insert info].

### Information on Vit A distribution

Vitamin A distribution is taking place at [insert info]. Contact [insert info] for more information.

### Type of assistance

Special food rations are available in feeding centres for [list groups who are most in need]. Feeding centres can be found at [insert info]. Opening times are [insert info].

### Procedure and criteria

Vulnerable people are being screened for malnutrition at [insert info]. Vulnerable people are considered [confirm definition in context eg girls and boys under 5 years old and pregnant and lactating women].

### What to do if no access to health care

If you don't have access to a health care facility, try and make sure your child eats regularly. Follow safe hygiene practices before eating or feeding your child. If you are pregnant it is important that you eat more than usual and regularly, even in emergency situations. It is also important to eat a range of different foods to get a balanced diet.

### Availability of assistance

You may find that the foods you usually feed your young child are not available. Different foods are being distributed for parents and caregivers of young children to make up the shortfall in what is available. Contact [insert info here] for more information or go to [insert info] from [insert info] to [insert info].

### See also the health topic on:

- **Breastfeeding**
- **Diarrhoea**
- **WASH**

### REFERENCES

For more information on this topic, we recommend you read the following references.

World Health Organization (2022): **Malnutrition**  
[https://www.who.int/health-topics/malnutrition#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/malnutrition#tab=tab_1)

World Health Organization (2021): **Malnutrition: factsheet**  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition>

World Health Organization (2020): **Healthy diet**  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet>

World Health Organization (2020): **Malnutrition: Emergencies and disasters**  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/malnutrition-emergencies-and-disasters>

#### HELP US KEEP THE LIBRARY UP TO DATE

If you would like to contribute to topic reviews, have found a message that needs greater clarity, or wish to create a new topic, please contact us at [info@cdacnetwork.org](mailto:info@cdacnetwork.org).