

A nutrition glossary

Talking about nutrition can sometimes get quite technical so we've put together this glossary to help you get to grips with some common terminology!

Acute malnutrition is a sudden, severe period of inadequate nutrition.

Anaemia is caused by a number of factors, but iron deficiency from not eating enough nutritious iron-rich food is thought to be the most common cause of anaemia globally.

Breastfeeding provides young infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development.

Chronic malnutrition is sustained, inadequate nutrition over a long period of time.

Malnutrition refers to undernutrition, overnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.

Micronutrient deficiencies result from low intake and/or absorption of adequate vitamins and minerals from a well balanced diet.

Nutrition is the process of consuming essential food in adequate quantities to support proper growth and good health.

Nutrition for Growth (N4G) brings together business leaders, scientists, governments and civil society organisations to make financial and political commitments to tackle malnutrition. The first N4G Summit was co-hosted by the UK and Brazil in London in 2013.

Nutrition-sensitive programmes focus on addressing some of the underlying reasons for malnutrition, such as agriculture or education.

Nutrition-specific programmes directly tackle the immediate causes of malnutrition, such as inadequate food intake, by providing food or nutrient supplements.

Obesity is when a person is too heavy for their height and is a form of malnutrition. Although someone may have enough food, these are not necessarily the right foods.

Overnutrition refers to the overconsumption of food and nutrients, which can cause obesity.

Stunting is the condition whereby a child is too short for their age, often the result of chronic or frequent undernutrition.

Undernutrition is caused by an inadequate diet and comprises stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiencies.

Wasting is the condition whereby a child is too thin for their age. This usually indicates recent weight loss, caused by not having enough food to eat or an infectious disease, such as diarrhoea, that has caused them to lose weight.