

# MALNUTRITION IN CHILDREN

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

### HOW CAN MALNUTRITION HARM YOUR CHILD?

Malnutrition affects the child's body and brain development. Children who are malnourished have a hard time keeping up in school.

They are also more likely to get sick because malnutrition reduces the body's ability to fight infections.

Malnutrition occurs when the body does not get enough foods that are needed to grow and stay healthy. It happens when a person does not eat enough food or does not eat some foods that are important for health and growth. Some people may also become malnourished because they have a disease that prevents them from using the nutrients they get from food.

### WHO IS AT RISK?

Children may suffer the most because they need a many different foods to grow and be healthy.

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

Sometimes, a child can appear normal and healthy even if they are malnourished. That is why it is important to take them for their check-up at the clinic.

In other cases the signs can include:

- Tiredness
- Trouble paying attention
- Swollen stomach
- Dry skin
- Very thin and short for their age

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- If you think your child may be malnourished, go to the doctor or to the WIC clinic. They will give your child a check-up and tell you what to do to make your child strong and healthy. You should go back for more check-ups to see if the baby is getting strong and healthy.
- Give your child a variety of healthy foods everyday including grains, fruits, vegetables, milk and other dairy foods, meat, fish and beans.
- If you are breastfeeding, you should eat enough healthy foods so that your body can produce enough milk for the baby and give you enough energy and other nutrients. You should eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein and foods with calcium such as milk.