



**Malnutrition Task Force**  
*Eating and drinking well in later life*

## SUPPORTER PACK

# UK Malnutrition Awareness Week 5th-12th October 2020

Thank you for downloading the #UKMAW2020 supporter pack. We hope that you find it useful.

If you have any questions or need help, email  
[enquiries@malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk)



## UK Malnutrition Awareness Week 2020

2020 will be the third year of UK Malnutrition Awareness Week (UKMAW), and what a year it's been so far.

In these uncertain times with the COVID19 pandemic, people have not been able to get out so often, and are worried about the winter and the approaching flu season, so raising the awareness of preventable malnutrition in some older people has become even more important.

UKMAW was co-founded in 2018, by the Malnutrition Task Force (MTF) and BAPEN with the aim to further raise awareness and understanding of the risks of malnutrition across different sectors and settings, in local communities and with the general public and health and social care professionals.

The week provides tips and ideas for how to identify malnutrition, how to help prevent it, and what to do if you are worried your own or somebody else's unplanned weight loss.

More than three million people across the UK are either malnourished or are at risk of becoming malnourished, with an estimated one million of these people over the age of 65. It's a silent, and often hidden problem which in most cases can be preventable.

### #UKMAW2020 is calling on everyone to:

- screen themselves, their loved ones and those they look after,
- recognise and understand the risks of undernutrition and dehydration in later life,
- know what do to prevent malnutrition,
- know what to do if there are concerns about someone who has experienced unplanned weight loss.



## Undernutrition in later life

Malnutrition (undernutrition) is characterised by low body weight or weight loss – it simply means that some older people are not eating well enough to maintain their health and well-being. Losing weight is not an inevitable part of ageing. Unintentional weight loss in later life is a serious issue. You can still be malnourished if you are seemingly overweight.

### It's worrying because...

Having nutritious and varied food is important for good health and well-being throughout life. As we age, it becomes even more important.

I wonder if it would surprise you that it is estimated that one in ten people over the age of 65 are at risk of malnutrition. You might know someone at risk, or it could even be you.

Ageing puts us all at risk of becoming malnourished. This is a concern because poor nutrition can be both a cause and a consequence of ill health.

Signs will often go unnoticed until they have a negative impact on our health and wellbeing. We can easily become malnourished if we don't eat enough for two or three days.

Malnourishment can affect health and well-being, and cause long-term health problems for otherwise healthy and independent older people.

It can also mean more visits to the GP, increased chances of being admitted to hospital and longer recovery times from illness.



## How we become malnourished

It's often a mixture of many different factors that contribute to undernourishment.

- Medical risks – sometimes malnutrition is a consequence of illness but with the right support it is often preventable and usually treatable.
- Physical risks – that make it difficult to get to the shops, prepare and cook food or eat independently.
- Social risks – these are often the most complex and interlinked and will include life changes.

## Recognise the signs

We can all become malnourished regardless of size, weight, or body shape. The main signs are:



- low body weight.
- unintentional weight loss.
- feeling lethargic or more tired.
- smaller appetite.
- having difficulties with chewing and swallowing.
- finding planning, cooking and shopping becoming more of an effort.
- mouth and dental problems.

## Manage the risk

In most cases, malnutrition and dehydration are largely preventable. Losing weight is not an inevitable part of ageing. Unintentional weight loss in later life is a serious issue.

It's always a good idea to regularly check your weight and keep a record. If you are concerned, do speak to your GP, Practice Nurse or another health professional. Keep up to date with screening and GP checks.

It's usual for our appetites to change as we get older. There are a number of changes we can make for ourselves that may encourage us and make it easier to eat .

## Our top 10 tips for eating well in later life

1. Getting thinner is not 'normal' or an inevitable part of later life. It is important to keep an eye on your weight as you get older and to spread the message that unexplained weight loss should be taken seriously. Try to weigh yourself regularly so you can see if you are losing weight.
2. If you have a small appetite, try eating small meals and snacks six times a day rather than three bigger meals.
3. Eating anything is better than nothing. Eat more protein - having protein with every meal will help us keep well-nourished.
4. Fortify food by adding full-fat foods like milk, butter, cream and cheese to your meal – it's a great way to increase the calorie content but not the portion size.
5. Try to drink 6-8 cups of fluid every day (this is about 1.5 litres or 2.5 pints). All hot and cold drinks count towards hydration so why not enjoy an extra cup of tea in the morning or maybe a hot chocolate after dinner.
6. Set yourself reminders to eat or enjoy a snack with your favourite TV programme.
7. If you are not leaving the house as much, why not try 'meeting up' with friends or family by arranging a video chat or telephone call over a coffee or a meal?
8. If your teeth or dentures are a problem, call your dentist to discuss it with them.
9. If you have trouble shopping or cooking food, a local community organisation such as Age UK may be able to help. To find your local Age UK, visit <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/> or call 0800 678 1602.
10. Supermarkets offer online shopping and home delivery services, which may make shopping easier for you. Some smaller supermarkets are offering a telephone service.

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**REMEMBER - IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT WEIGHT LOSS, HAVE A SMALL APPETITE, OR FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO CHEW OR SWALLOW FOOD, TALK TO YOUR GP, PRACTICE NURSE OR ANOTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL.**

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# Getting involved with UK Malnutrition Awareness Week #UMAW2020

Join us in starting conversations about malnutrition and help us take action so that everyone knows how to prevent it, how to spot it and what to do.

## 1. Download our free toolkit

Throughout #UKMAW2020, we are calling on everyone to screen themselves, their loved ones and those they look after to encourage us all to recognise and understand the risks of undernutrition and dehydration in later life and find out what we can do to prevent it.

Our free self-screening toolkit brings together tools that have been developed for use in the community by non-clinical staff, including volunteers and carers who work with older people, or by older people and their families. It includes:

- ✓ The Nutrition Wheel - this cannot be downloaded, so please visit: <https://www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk/small-appetite/>
- ✓ The Patients Association Checklist
- ✓ BAPEN's online screening guide
- ✓ Eating Well in Later Life booklet
- ✓ Tools Guide to start conversations

You can get the Resource Pack by visiting our [website page here](#).

## 2. Download our resources

[Visit our website](#) to find out how to get the resource pack.

BAPEN and the Malnutrition Task Force have developed a range of materials that can be downloaded and freely shared amongst your friends, families and colleagues. These include:

1. [Are you eating enough to stay well?](#)
2. [Have you fallen for the malnutrition myths?](#)
3. [Understanding the risk of malnutrition as you age](#)
4. [Be weight-loss aware poster](#)
5. [Noticed unintentional weight loss?](#)
6. [BAPEN online self-screening guide](#)
7. [Selfie challenge](#)

### 3. Join the conversation #UKMAW2020

We will be leading a social media campaign from 5th – 12th October on Twitter and Instagram. Download our infographics and example tweets and join the conversation. On Twitter, remember to follow [@MalnutritionTF](#) and [@BAPENUK](#) and tag [#UKMAW2020](#) in your posts. On Instagram you can find us [@UKMalnutritionAwarenessWeek](#)

### 4. Join our webinar..

To kick off #UKMAW2020, as usual MTF will be hosting a learning event on 5th October 2020. If you would like to present in the following categories research, care homes, community and voluntary sector organisations please email the details to [lesley.carter@ageuk.org.uk](mailto:lesley.carter@ageuk.org.uk) Bookings will be via Eventbrite in mid-September.

### 5. Learn more about malnutrition from our website

- How to screen yourselves, your loved ones and those you look after
- How to recognise and understand the risks of undernutrition and dehydration in later life
- What they can do to prevent it — our Top Ten Tips are a great place to increase your knowledge, share them with your friends, family and colleagues or download our booklet, **Eating Well in Later Life** for free.

### Share your top tips ideas show us how you are supporting #UKMAW2020

Use social media to tell us why you think there should be ‘more conversations’ about malnutrition and how it affects people over the age of 65.

You can visit our website to download a ‘selfie’ card, called #MAWconversations.

Take a picture of yourself posing with this and post it on your social media remembering to tag us and use the hashtags #MAWconversations and #MAW2020!



**Thank you to everyone for supporting the #UKMAW2020 campaign by helping spread the word about eating and drinking well in later life.**

## The Malnutrition Task Force

The MTF is united to combat preventable and avoidable malnutrition and dehydration among older people in the UK. We believe that good nutrition and hydration are fundamental to delivering dignified care and enabling older people to live fulfilling and independent lives. Funded by apetito, Nutricia, and AgeUK

Tackling malnutrition is everybody's business.

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