

Recognising malnutrition

A print-ready fact sheet for clinics, classrooms and community groups.

Category	Nutrition
Translations	18 languages
Print format	A4 with printable measuring strip
Licence	CC BY-NC 4.0 - translate and adapt freely

Mid-upper-arm circumference is the fastest reliable screen for acute malnutrition in children aged six months to five years, and it can be taught to anyone in under an hour.

What to do

- Measure the left arm, hanging relaxed at the side.
- Find the midpoint between the shoulder tip and the elbow.
- Wrap the strip firmly but without compressing the flesh.
- Read the value at the window and record it.

Signs that mean go to a clinic

- Red, under 115 mm: severe acute malnutrition. Refer the same day.
- Yellow, 115 to 125 mm: moderate acute malnutrition. Enrol in supplementary feeding.
- Green, over 125 mm: adequate. Re-screen at the next visit.
- Any swelling of both feet is severe malnutrition regardless of the measurement.

Using this sheet

This sheet may be translated and adapted for non-commercial use with attribution. Ask us and we will send the layered source files so a translation does not have to be typed over an image. Please do not alter clinical guidance in a way that changes its meaning.