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## The 4 Things You Must Eat To Avoid Malnutrition

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While those of us living comfortably in the United States do not see malnutrition on a regular basis, it can and will pose a problem if [an unprepared population](#)<sup>[1]</sup> finds itself dealing with a long-term disaster.

During the turbulent times of the Great Depression, malnutrition was at the forefront of health issues and as a result, many suffered short and long-term effects of this health problem.

Equipping yourself with the knowledge of *why* we should store certain types of food, knowing the

health benefits these foods possess, how they affect our bodies, and how our bodies respond when these types of foods become scarce will help you make better choices when investing in your food storage.

Vitamin deficiency, stunted growth, skin infections, hair loss, increased illness and even death are all contributing factors to being malnourished. Malnutrition can also occur from improper water treatment. Globally, untreated water is one of the leading causes of malnutrition and one of the [four most likely ways you can die in a SHTF scenario](#)<sup>[2]</sup>. As a result, an individual who is malnourished can have severe, or prolonged diarrhea, renal failure, infection, or diseases that cause the malabsorption of nutrients in the small intestine. Children, particularly infants and those under five years of age are also at an increased risk for malnutrition due to a greater need for energy and nutrients during periods of rapid growth and development. [Elderly](#)<sup>[3]</sup> adults are also prone to malnutrition as a result of a decrease in both the appetite and intestinal function. Therefore, preventative measure should be put in place for these vulnerable age groups to ward off this health issue.

### 4 Food Types to Avoid Malnutrition

Concentrating on storing foods that have carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals can assist in maintaining healthy bodies and decrease the likelihood of malnutrition in a long-term emergency. To find out how much food your family needs for a long-term emergency, [click here](#)<sup>[4]</sup>. Those that are preparedness-minded may want to take a more in-depth look at the question of *why it is important to store these types of food*.

**Carbohydrates** – Simply put, carbohydrates provide the body with energy. They also have a symbiotic relationship with proteins by protecting the protein stores in the body. The brain optimally uses carbohydrates for energy, but when there is insufficient carbohydrate consumption for several weeks, the body does not metabolize fatty acids completely and as a result body protein will also be lost, and the body will generally become weakened.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, half your daily calories should come from carbohydrates, so you can determine how many grams of carbohydrates you need based on your calorie intake. At a *minimum*, an intake of 50 to 100 grams (1.8 to 3.5 oz.) of carbohydrates is required to prevent the development of ketones that the brain can use somewhat inefficiently for energy

*Preps to buy: white rice, pasta, wheat, oats, [dehydrated fruits and vegetables](#)<sup>[5]</sup>, sugars, honey, fruits, roots and tubers (cook these well) and cereals. For those with wheat allergies, [click here](#)<sup>[6]</sup>.*

**Protein** - Protein is a part of every cell in the human body. Also, equally as important, proteins provide the body with a special form of nitrogen that the body cannot get from carbohydrates or lipids. Proteins also help regulate the pH, or acid-base balance, in the blood, are necessary for the synthesis of many hormones and enzymes, and participate in important cell formation for cells vital for the immune system. In the case of starvation, excessive muscle tissue is wasted and results in diminished health.

Protein, like carbohydrates, provides approximately 4 kilocalories per gram of protein consumed, but requires much more metabolizing and processing by the liver and kidneys to put the energy from protein to use. In general, it's recommended that 10–35% of your daily calories come from protein.

*Preps to buy: legumes, eggs, nuts, peanut butter, canned meats and fish, oatmeal, grains, wheat, quinoa, [MRES](#)<sup>[7]</sup>, popcorn*

**Fats** - As much as we would like to eliminate fats from our regular diets, this food source actually plays a vital role in maintaining healthy skin and hair, insulating body organs against shock, maintaining body temperature, and promoting healthy cell function. They also serve as energy stores for the body. In addition, Vitamins A, D, E, and K are fat-soluble, meaning they can only be digested, absorbed, and transported in conjunction with fats. Fats are also sources of essential fatty acids, an important dietary requirement and also serves as a useful buffer towards a host of diseases. ([Source](#)<sup>[8]</sup>) The USDA suggests that about 30-35% of your daily calorie intake should come from fat.

*Preps to buy: whole milk, ensure, peanut butter, oil (preferably plant based oils), nuts and seeds*

**Vitamins and Minerals** - Did you know that a staggering thirteen vitamins are considered necessary to perform crucial functions in the body? [Vitamins and minerals](#)<sup>[9]</sup> are needed for overall health and provide protection against infection and diseases, help the body grow, help the body's metabolism and assist in the removal of waste products. It is recommended to obtain your vitamin intake through fresh fruits and vegetables with a regular diet. However, when dietary sources are limited, taking vitamin supplements is an excellent alternative. Amounts vary for children, seniors, lactating or pregnant women, smokers, heavy alcohol drinkers, stressed, those with chronic diseases or those who consume less than 2,000 calories per day.

Because vitamin deficiencies tend to exacerbate over time, we are typically unaware of being deficient until secondary issues manifest themselves. Eating a balanced diet and taking a multi vitamin is one way to curb this issue and the physiological consequences that go with it. Some physiological consequences of deficiency include: [dental problems](#)<sup>[10]</sup>, inflammation of the mouth and tongue (riboflavin deficiency); diarrhea, dermatitis (niacin deficiency); edema, weakness (thiamin deficiency); tongue soreness, anemia (biotin deficiency); fatigue, tingling in hands (pantothenic acid deficiency); poor growth, inflammation of the tongue (folate deficiency); poor nerve function, macrocytic anemia (vitamin B12 deficiency); and poor wound healing, bleeding gums (vitamin C deficiency).

*Preps to Buy: Multi vitamins, Vitamin C, [Vitamin D](#)<sup>[11]</sup>, [vitamin powders](#)<sup>[12]</sup>, [dehydrated fruits and vegetables](#)<sup>[5]</sup>, [seeds to grow vegetables](#)<sup>[13]</sup> and for [sprouting](#)<sup>[14]</sup>, [survival bars](#)<sup>[15]</sup>*

In summation, as our standard of living continues to diminish, malnutrition will be a more present health problem within our population. Investing in healthy and nutritious foods and learning how to [properly store](#)<sup>[16]</sup> it for long-term use can assist you in maintaining your health and prevent the short and long-term affects of malnourishment discussed in this article.

Parts of this article were adapted from [E notes](#) <sup>[17]</sup>

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[17] E notes: <http://www.enotes.com/food-encyclopedia/malnutrition>

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