

What causes Maternal and Child Malnutrition?

Today 7,000 young children will die from malnutrition while countless others live out their childhoods in a state of chronic malnourishment. Understanding how this happens is the first step to solving this silent crisis.

The seeds of lifelong health & development are planted in the first 1,000 days



The 1,000 days from the start of a woman's pregnancy to her child's 2nd birthday are critical to long-term human development. The right nutrition during these 1,000 days produces a lifetime of benefits: healthy growth and brain development, a stronger immune system, higher IQ, better educational performance, greater lifetime earning potential.



> Savings of \$20–30 billion annually in health costs.¹



> Increases in GDP up to 3% annually.²



> Productivity gains of as much as \$138 for each \$1 invested.³

Citations:

- ¹ FAO, State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2004.
- ² The World Bank, Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development, 2006.
- ³ Copenhagen Consensus 2012, Challenge Paper: Hunger and Malnutrition.



Better nutrition in the 1,000-day window can help families and societies break the cycle of poverty



Food

Insufficient access to affordable, nutritious food. Without sufficient calories or the right nutrients in their diets, women and children are susceptible to the dire, sometimes deadly, consequences of malnutrition.⁴



Care

Lack of proper care of mothers and children and poor infant feeding practices. Nearly one million child deaths per year could be prevented if children were breast-fed exclusively during their first six months.⁵



Health

Poor access to health services and unhealthy household environment. Disease, unsafe water, and improper sanitation contribute to malnutrition, particularly in children.⁶

At the root of the problem



Poverty

Poverty can lead to malnutrition and malnutrition can, in turn, trap people in poverty. For children malnourished early in life, this trap can last a lifetime.⁷



Status of women

Women's lack of access to economic resources and educational opportunities can hinder progress toward eliminating child malnutrition. It is estimated that the odds of a child being severely undernourished are reduced by 50% if his mother owns land.⁸

72 children

will die from malnutrition by the time you finish reading this info graphic. Virtually all of these deaths are **preventable**.

Citations:

- ⁴ The World Bank, Global Monitoring Report 2012.
- ⁵ Save the Children, State of the World's Mothers 2012.
- ⁶ WHO, Safer Water, Better Health: Costs, Benefits and Sustainability of Interventions to Protect and Promote Health, 2008.
- ⁷ Effect of a nutrition intervention during early childhood on economic productivity in Guatemalan adults, The Lancet, 2008.
- ⁸ World Development, Do Women's Land Rights Promote Empowerment and Child Health in Nepal? 2007.