

# Impact of dietary modifications on malnutrition in rural community

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Dietary modification strategies to address malnutrition should, therefore, focus on the nutritional quality of the diet, rather than on energy content only. Animal foods are particularly rich sources of bio-available iron, zinc and vitamin A and these nutrients are difficult to obtain in adequate amounts from plant foods alone. Foods of animal sources (particularly muscle tissue) also enhance the absorption of the less bio-available non-heme iron. Dietary modification strategies need to be introduced from a very young age. In the developed world, commercially available baby products play an important role in meeting the nutritional requirements of infants, but in developing countries cost and possible contamination (bottle feeds) prohibit the use of baby products. Addition of small amounts of foods of animal sources can improve the nutritional quality of the diet, as well the nutritional status and functional outcomes of rural populations. A moderate increase in the consumption of animal source foods includes availability, affordability and lack of cold storage facilities. Adequate dietary intake is essential for good nutrition, but frequent infections can also lead to malnutrition. The underlying causes of malnutrition, *i.e.* inadequate care on the one hand and insufficient health services and an unhealthy environment on the other hand, should also, therefore, be addressed.

**Key Words :** Dietary, Modifications, Rural community, Cereals, Animal source foods

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