



JOINT MISSION STATEMENT

UK MALNUTRITION AWARENESS WEEK

Ask, Look, Listen. We're ALL in this together.

11th-17th
OCTOBER
2021

UK Malnutrition Awareness Week was founded by the Malnutrition Task Force and BAPEN in 2018 to raise awareness of undernutrition and dehydration in the UK. The campaign seeks to increase understanding of the dangers, risk factors and signs of malnutrition and dehydration amongst health and social care workers, community groups, the public, parliamentarians and policy makers. This year, our focus is on encouraging everybody to work together to improve understanding, identification, prevention and management of malnutrition and dehydration.

The challenge

More than three million people across the UK are either malnourished or at risk of becoming malnourished, with an estimated one million of these people over the age of 65.¹

Following the coronavirus outbreak in the UK we believe more people will be at risk of malnutrition. It is both a cause and a consequence of ill health and is often a hidden problem that goes unnoticed. Malnutrition can have a devastating effect on physical health and emotional wellbeing and can often lead to or exacerbate long-term health problems. Yet sadly many of us are not familiar with the signs, symptoms and risk factors that would help us recognise that a loved one or somebody in our community is at risk of suffering from the condition.

Our vision

We envisage a future for the UK where preventing and managing malnutrition is everybody's business. This means that we want:

- Members of the public to understand the risks, causes, and signs of malnutrition, and know where to access resources and self-screening tools.
- Health and social care professionals to be able to spot the signs and symptoms of malnutrition and routinely screen for malnutrition.
- Policy makers to be engaged in helping to raise the profile of malnutrition (and dehydration) as a public health issue.

Ask, Look, Listen

This year we have a simple request - for everybody to Ask, Look and Listen and recognise that we are ALL in this together.

- **Ask** If you know somebody who may be vulnerable because they are older, because they have health problems, or perhaps because they are isolated, don't be afraid to ask them if they are eating and drinking okay. Don't be afraid to ask about somebody's appetite or ability to prepare food and drink, it could make all the difference and help you stop malnutrition in its tracks.
- **Look** Always be on the lookout for telltale signs of unplanned weight loss such as looser clothing, loose belts or rings or dentures. And remember you won't always see weight loss so keep your eyes open for other signs like empty fridges and cupboards.
- **Listen** Listen out for what somebody is telling you about their life. It may not be about eating and drinking directly, but is it about feeling lonely, or losing interest in things that usually give them pleasure? Practice active listening and think about how the way somebody is feeling generally may affect how they are able to look after themselves.



Malnutrition Task Force
Eating and drinking well in later life



**UK MALNUTRITION
AWARENESS
WEEK**

#UKMAW2021



Malnutrition Task Force

Eating and drinking well in later life

The Malnutrition Task Force are united to combat preventable and avoidable malnutrition and dehydration among older people in the UK. Established in 2012, we believe that good nutrition and hydration is vital to enabling older people to live fulfilling and independent lives.

We seek to raise awareness of undernutrition in later life its causes, and provide information and guidance, work with partners across sectors and settings to improve the working lives of older people in the UK.

For more information visit:

<https://www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk/uk-malnutrition-awareness-week-2021>



We know that before COVID19 malnutrition was a huge problem. Now we are at the edge of a crisis, and we must take action to raise awareness that older people are now even more vulnerable than ever before. We know that people are still struggling. Many older people have become less physically mobile, have experienced loss, bereavement sadness and loneliness. Many are lacking in confidence, and have worries about their mental health and well-being.

As winter approaches, there are already concerns over the difficulties that older people may have in buying, preparing, cooking, eating as well as having enough food and drink. With health and care services, voluntary sector and community food providers stretched, and struggling to keep up it is not a reassuring picture ahead.

In our Call to Action this year for #UKMAW2021 we are requesting everybody to Ask, Look and Listen for signs of malnutrition in the older people you love or care for. We really are all in this together and if we all play our part together, we can become stronger to raise awareness and tackle malnutrition and dehydration.

We are asking everyone to do something, start conversations, Ask questions, Look for support and Listen; and share ideas and suggestions for making sure everybody has access to enough food and drink and timely nutritional care when they need it.

Dianne Jeffrey CBE DL, Chair, Malnutrition Task Force



BAPEN



UK Malnutrition Awareness Week gives us the opportunity to highlight the need to improve identification and management of disease-related malnutrition in the UK as well as better understanding of the needs of people who are at risk and of people who rely on artificial nutrition and nutrition support. During the week we are proud to work alongside the Malnutrition Task Force in providing advice, information and hopefully motivation to help tackle the problems we face, as well as taking the temperature of the malnutrition problem in the UK with the return of our nutrition screening survey. We believe that partnership and combined efforts are essential to help reduce the burden of malnutrition in the UK today, and call on our members to join us and help out this week spreading the word as far and wide as possible.

Dr Trevor Smith, BAPEN President

BAPEN is a charity that works tirelessly to raise awareness of malnutrition in the UK. The organisation was founded in 1992 to bring together dietitians, doctors, nurses, patients and pharmacists into an integrated and effective organisation dedicated to improving nutritional care. Our aim is to advance the nutritional care of patients in health and care settings and those at risk of malnutrition within the wider community.

For more information visit: www.bapen.org.uk/malnutrition-undernutrition/combating-malnutrition/malnutrition-awareness-week