



5 Fast Facts About Hunger

Malnutrition – the state of being poorly nourished – is not merely a result of having too little food, but of a combination of factors: insufficient protein, energy and micronutrients, frequent infections or disease, poor care and feeding practices, inadequate health services, and unsafe water and sanitation. ([UNICEF](#))

It is estimated that 854 million people in the world suffer from **chronic hunger and malnutrition**. This means that 1 in nearly 7 people do not get enough food to be healthy and lead an active life, making hunger and malnutrition the number one risk to health worldwide – greater than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined. ([World Food Programme](#))

About 24,000 people **die every day from hunger** or hunger-related causes. Three-fourths of the deaths are children under the age of 5. ([The Hunger Site](#))

Malnutrition can severely affect a child's **intellectual development**. Children who have stunted growth due to malnutrition score significantly lower on math and language achievement tests than do well-nourished children. Preschool and school-aged children who experience severe hunger have higher levels of chronic illness, anxiety and depression, and behavior problems than children without hunger. ([UNICEF](#))

Obesity is another form of malnutrition. Globally, there are more than 1 billion overweight adults, and at least 300 million of them are obese. Childhood obesity is a serious global health concern, reaching epidemic levels in some countries. From 1980 to 2000, the number of overweight adults in the United States doubled and the number of overweight adolescents tripled, according to U.S. Surgeon General. ([World Health Organization, U.S. Surgeon General](#))

Hunger persists in the **United States**. 35 million people – including almost 13 million children – live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger. This represents approximately one in eleven (or 11% of) households in the United States. ([U.S. Department of Agriculture](#))

The world produces enough food to feed everyone. World agriculture produces 17% more calories per person today than it did 30 years ago, despite a 70% population increase. This is enough to provide everyone in the world with at least 2,720 kilocalories (kcal) per person per day. The principal problem is that many people in the world do not have sufficient land to grow, or income to purchase, sufficient food. ([Food and Agriculture Organization](#))