

Malnutrition

Is your patient at risk?

Malnutrition Screening Tool¹ (MST)

1. Have you/the patient lost weight recently without trying?

No	0
Unsure	2
Yes, how much (kg)?	
1 – 5	1
6 – 10	2
5 – 11	3
> 15	4
Unsure	2

Applies to the last six months

If unsure, ask if they suspect they have lost weight - eg, clothes are looser

For example, less than three-quarters of usual intake; may also be eating poorly due to chewing and swallowing problems.

2. Have you/the patient been eating poorly because of a decreased appetite?

No	0
Yes	1

Of weight loss and appetite questions

Total Score

Score 2 or more

If your patients have lost weight and/or are eating poorly - ie, score two or more, or they are very underweight, then they may be at risk of malnutrition.

Action

1. Refer to Malnutrition Action Flowchart and/or refer to Dietitian for full assessment and intervention
2. Document
3. Weigh patient's on admission and:
 - (a) weekly (acute)
 - (b) monthly (long-term care)
4. Re-screen patients:
 - (a) weekly (acute)
 - (b) monthly (long-term care)

Small weekly weight losses add up to significant weight loss and malnutrition

Note: Overweight/obese residents who have unexplained weight loss and illness can become protein depleted/malnourished too



Malnutrition occurs in approximately 30% of patients in Australian hospitals²

1. Ferguson M, Capra S, Bauer J, Banks M. (1999). Development of a valid and reliable malnutrition screening tool for adult acute hospital patients. *Nutrition*, 15, 458-64.
2. Agarwal, E., Ferguson, M., Banks, M., Bauer, J., Capra, S., and Isenring, E., (2012) Nutritional status and dietary intake of acute care patients: Results from the Nutrition Care Day Survey 2010. *Clinical Nutrition*, 31(1), 41-47.