

FAO Basic definitions of Hunger

Undernutrition

The result of prolonged low levels of food intake and/or low absorption of food consumed. Generally applied to energy (or protein and energy) deficiency, but it may also relate to vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Undernourishment or Chronic Hunger

The status of persons, whose food intake regularly provides less than their minimum energy requirements.

The average minimum energy requirement per person is about 1800 kcal per day. The exact requirement is determined by a person's age, body size, activity level and physiological conditions such as illness, infection, pregnancy and lactation.

Malnutrition

A broad term for a range of conditions that hinder good health, caused by inadequate or unbalanced food intake or from poor absorption of food consumed. It refers to both undernutrition (food deprivation) and overnutrition (excessive food intake in relation to energy requirements).

Food security

Exists when all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

Food insecurity

Exists when people lack access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food, and therefore are not consuming enough for an active and healthy life. This may be due to the unavailability of food, inadequate purchasing power, or inappropriate utilization at household level.