

# Assessing the Underlying Causes of Malnutrition

Adapted from Malnutrition Pathway ([Malnutrition Pathway Screening Assessment](#)) please refer to specific condition guidance for appropriate nutritional management options

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| Chronic / acute medical condition causing poor appetite or nausea, e.g. cancer, COPD, dementia, frailty, treatment side-effects | ➔ | Try small, frequent meals, cold foods with no smell, savoury foods. Optimise antiemetics (frequency and timing)                                     |
| Constipation causing abdominal discomfort and poor appetite   | ➔ | Ensure adequate hydration and fibre intake. Consider aperients.   |
| Difficulty swallowing, e.g. coughing on eating / drinking, food 'sticking' in throat  | ➔ | Refer to Speech and Language Therapy for assessment   |
| Low mood and anxiety, e.g. loneliness, depression, bereavement, isolation   | ➔ | GP or mental health review. Review social support needs and consider referral to social prescriber / voluntary sector support services, e.g. Age UK |
| Problems with / loss of teeth or dentures. Sore dry mouth, e.g. oral thrush and mouth ulcers                                    | ➔ | Consider treatment side-effects. Check oral hygiene needs are met. Dental review.   |
| Unable to do own shopping or cook / feed self   | ➔ | Trial home food delivery. Help from relatives / friends. Refer to social services and / or community therapy team                                   |
| Financial difficulties  | ➔ | Refer to social services  |
| Substance misuse or excessive alcohol intake exceeding maximum recommendations (14 units per week)                              | ➔ | Advise on recommendations. Refer to community drug and alcohol services   |

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