

# Abstract

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## Nutrition and performance in children.

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**PURPOSE OF REVIEW:** Malnutrition in late infancy and childhood remains a significant public health issue in developing nations as well as for those in transition to an industrialized economy. In addition, in these settings and particularly in developed nations, overweight is becoming a very serious threat to both the immediate and the long-term health of children. In this review, we present recent studies that have examined relationships between childhood undernutrition and three general areas of performance: physical activity, cognition and behavior.

**RECENT FINDINGS:** Malnourished children have been shown to have decreased physical activity and endurance, and poorer cognitive function and school performance. Multiple single micronutrient deficiencies, including vitamin B12, thiamin, niacin, zinc and iron, have been associated with poorer cognitive performance. Behavioral problems, including attention deficits, have also been associated with food insufficiency and malnutrition.

**SUMMARY:** The effects of impaired nutritional status during childhood may have long-standing consequences for the health and performance of children during their adult years.

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