

## BBC: Science can improve the nutrition of millions

**The word ‘malnourishment’ conjures images of natural disasters, droughts and children with swollen bellies. But malnourishment is not just a lack of calories. It can also be caused by not having enough vitamins, minerals, and protein.**

The absence of these key nutrients has severe effects on the body. Lack of protein causes stunted growth in children, decreased immunity and weakening of the heart and respiratory system. Iron deficiency anaemia contributes to 20 percent of all maternal deaths and 50 million people worldwide have some degree of mental impairment caused by iodine deficiency.

World malnourishment is a complex problem, but science may offer some solutions. Scientists have explored many ways to improve people’s diets, from adding nutrients to food that people already eat, to creating new types of food in the laboratory.

**Chronic malnourishment is a complex, global issue that has severe consequences for the health of those affected. Scientists are looking at a range of approaches to help super-charge food with better nutrients.**

Adding micronutrients to staple foods such as sugar and cereal during processing has been a key way to improve the nutrition of large populations. However, in very poor communities, not everyone will have access to these foods.

Scientists are now developing bio-fortified foods such as Golden Rice, which has been genetically engineered to contain Vitamin A. It can be given to people who rely on rice as a staple food and grown locally.

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