



Micronutrient Deficiencies --Fact Sheet

Iron

- Iron deficiency is the most common micronutrient deficiency in the world and a main cause of anemia, a condition in which the blood contains low levels of red blood cells.
- 2 billion people worldwide are estimated to suffer from anemia.
- Iron deficiency causes fatigue, reduces work capacity, and weakens the immune system.
- Severe anemia also heightens the risk of women dying during childbirth and impairs children's physical growth, mental development, and learning capability.

Vitamin A

- Vitamin A is essential for the functioning of the human immune system and can help increase resistance to disease, protect against blindness, and improve chances for survival, growth, and development.
- Vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of preventable blindness in children. More than 4 million preschool-aged children have visible eye damage due to vitamin A deficiency.
- Close to 20 million pregnant women in developing countries are vitamin A deficient. About one-third of them are also clinically night-blind.

Zinc

- The human body relies on zinc to heal wounds, grow and repair body tissue, properly clot blood, and ensure sound fetal development.
- Approximately one-third of the world's population lives in countries where the risk of zinc deficiency is high.
- More than 400,000 children die each year due to zinc deficiency.
- Severely malnourished children or those with persistent diarrhea or respiratory problems may be zinc deficient.
- The clearest indicator of zinc deficiency is stunting in children.

HarvestPlus leads a global effort to improve nutrition and public health by developing and disseminating staple food crops that are rich in vitamins and minerals. We work with public and private sector partners in more than 40 countries. HarvestPlus is part of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) which helps realize the potential of agricultural development to deliver gender-equitable health and nutritional benefits to the poor. CGIAR is a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future. Its science is carried out by its 15 research centers in collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations. The HarvestPlus program is coordinated by two of these centers, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).



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