

The background of the top half of the advertisement is a photograph of a woman and two children. The woman is in the center, smiling broadly with her mouth open. To her left is a young girl wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat, also smiling. To her right is another child, possibly a boy, with a straw hat, smiling and looking towards the camera. They are all outdoors under a bright, clear sky.

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Women's health depends on a lifetime of answers—one test at a time.

Women and Nutrition

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Nutrition is a critical part of health and development. Better nutrition is related to improved infant, child, and maternal health; stronger immune systems; safer pregnancy and childbirth; lower risk of noncommunicable diseases (such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease); and longevity.¹

- Good nutrition is based on the adequate, balanced intake and utilization of nutrients. These nutrients include protein, carbohydrates, fats, and lipids; a range of vitamins; and a host of minerals and trace elements.
- Women have changing nutrient needs throughout their lifespan. Rapid growth during adolescence, menstruation, and the demands of pregnancy and lactation during the reproductive years can result in bone loss and an increased risk of low-level nutrients such as iron, folic acid, calcium, and vitamin A.²
- Women's health and nutritional well-being are significantly impacted by the socioeconomic environments in which they live. When a crisis hits, women are generally the first to sacrifice their food consumption in order to protect the food consumption of their families.²
- Malnutrition is the single largest contributor to disease in the world. The disease burden associated with malnutrition, both under- and overnutrition, affects women and their children.³
- The nutritional status of women and children is particularly important, because it is through women and their offspring that the harmful effects of malnutrition are propagated to future generations.²

Answers for life.

- Despite their vulnerability to malnutrition, women are in a unique position to improve nutrition in their households. Women have the primary responsibility for growing, purchasing, processing, and preparing most of the food that is consumed in their families and communities.¹

Global Burden⁴

- Women produce half of the world's food. In developing countries, 79% of economically active women spend their working hours producing food through agriculture.
- Malnutrition impairs the immune system of at least 100 million young children and several million pregnant women worldwide.
- In the United States, researchers estimate that more than 13 million children have a difficult time getting all the food they need.

- Malnutrition is not confined to the developing world. In some industrialized countries, widening income disparities coupled with reductions in social protection are having worrying effects on the nutritional well-being of children.
- In the United Kingdom, children and adults in poor families face health risks of anemia, premature and low-weight births, dental diseases, diabetes, obesity, and hypertension linked to diet.
- More than 2 billion people—principally women and children—are iron-deficient, and the World Health Organization has estimated that 51% of children under the age of 4 in developing countries are anemic.

- In some parts of the world— notably Latin America and East Asia—there have been dramatic gains in reducing child malnutrition. But overall, the absolute number of malnourished children worldwide has grown. Half of South Asia's children are malnourished. In Africa, one of every three children is underweight, and in several countries on the continent, the nutritional status of children is worsening.

References

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