

What is the Malnutrition Screening Tool (MST)?

The Malnutrition Screening Tool (MST) is an easy to use, two question screening tool. The MST is intended for use by volunteers or staff caring for older people. Please contact us if you require assistance using this document.

It gives a score out of five to show the level of malnutrition risk. It can be used to decide how to help and what follow-up is needed.

Question 1: Have you/the client lost weight recently without trying?

- Applies to the last six months.
- If unsure, ask about things that might indicate they have lost weight e.g. clothes or rings are looser, using a different belt notch.
- Emphasis is on 'without trying'.

Question 2: Have you/the client been eating poorly because of a decreased appetite?

- Applies to the last six months.
- For example less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of usual intake.
- Emphasis is on 'eating poorly'. Most often this is due to a poor appetite, but there may be other reasons sometimes e.g. chewing/swallowing difficulties.

Total score

To calculate the total score, add the point(s) from question one and question two together to get a total.

- A score of 0 – 1 indicates a low risk of malnutrition.
- A score of 2 indicates a moderate risk of malnutrition.
- A score of 3 – 5 indicates a high risk of malnutrition.

Example scenario

Bill is 72 years old. He has been visiting his local day centre for the last three years. Every six months the day centre coordinator reviews their clients, as part of this process they screen for malnutrition using the MST.

Malnutrition Screening Tool (MST)

Obtain consent to complete this screening by asking

'Can I ask you some questions about your nutritional health?'

Applies to the last 6 months	1. Have you / the client lost weight recently without trying?	
	NO	0
	UNSURE	2
	YES, how much (kg)?	
	1 – 5 (2 – 13 lbs)	1
	6 – 10 (14 – 23 lbs)	2
	11 – 15 (24 – 33 lbs)	3
	>15 (> 33 lbs)	4
	Unsure	2
For example less than ¾ of usual intake	2. Have you / the client been eating poorly because of a decreased appetite?	
	NO	0
	YES	1
Total of weight loss and appetite questions	Total Score:	1

Adapted from: 'Malnutrition – Is your patient at risk?' Screening Tool and Action Flowchart, Merrillyn Banks APD, Ferguson M, et al. *Nutrition* 1999, 15; 458-464

Question 1: Bill has lost 3 kg in the last six months = 1 point

Question 2: Bill has not been eating poorly, his appetite has been good. = 0 points.

To calculate Bill's total score the day centre coordinator adds the points from question one and question two together to get a total.

Total score: Question 1 + Question 2

1 + 0 = 1. Bill's total MST score is 1.

Bill is at low risk of malnutrition.