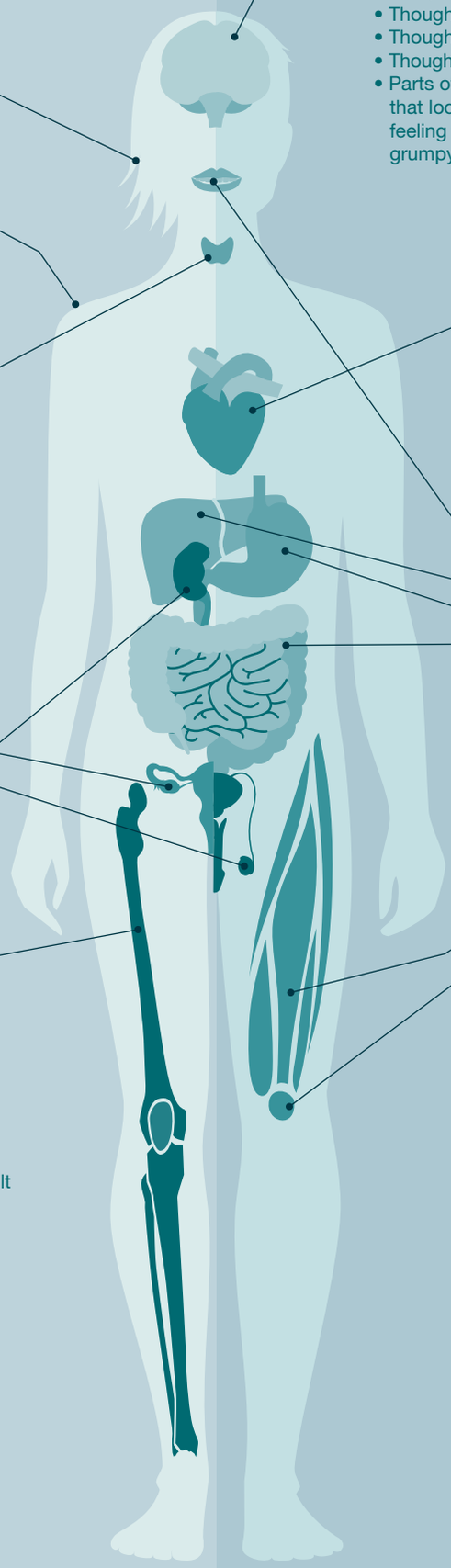
Medical Complications of Malnutrition



HAIR

- Hairs thins and is easily broken
- Hair falls out
- Fine downy hair grows to keep you warm

BRAIN

- Brain shrinks
- Hard to make decisions
- Hard to concentrate on tasks and to learn
- Feeling: irritable, moody, withdrawn, tired, anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide
- Thoughts that won't go away
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or wanting to die
- Thought patterns about your body, food and eating changes
- Parts of the brain may not work well: that look after growing, being hot or cold, feeling thirsty, hungry or sleepy, feeling sad or grumpy as well as not feeling like sex

SKIN

- Dry skin
- Cracking skin
- Easily bruised
- Poor circulation with dusky fingers and toes
- Skin is much slower to heal
- Sores from lying in one position for too long

HEART

- Slow heart beat
- Low blood pressure
- Heart beat feels out of rhythm
- Racing heart beat
- Lightheadedness and fainting
- Heart changes size and shape
- Parts of the heart don't work as well as usual
- Swelling of ankles

ENDOCRINE

- Pubertal delay
- Growth failure and stunting of adult height
- Low production of reproductive hormones
- Periods may become light, irregular or stop altogether
- Fertility is impaired for both girls and boys
- If do become pregnant, more likely to give birth early and to have abnormally small babies
- Abnormal functioning of the thyroid gland
- Increase in stress hormones

GUT

- Enamel loss and dental caries (teeth rot)
- Swollen salivary glands
- Constipation
- Slow digestion, food moves slowly through the gut with tummy pain
- Bloating, feeling full
- Feeling sick in the stomach
- Stomach acid burning
- Liver damage

KIDNEY

- Dehydration, low level of body fluids
- Kidneys fail

MUSCLE & JOINTS

- Weak muscles and joints
- Muscles shrink

BONES & BONE MARROW

- Reduced peak bone mass
- Weak, thin bones
- Bone pain
- Bones break easily
- Bones remain weak and thin as an adult
- Bone marrow stops working, not as many blood cells are made

METABOLIC

- Slowed metabolic rate
- Slowed processing of food into energy
- Low blood sugar levels
- Body salts, vitamins and minerals are not balanced
- Fatigue
- Low body temperature and feeling cold

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