

# Nutrition<sup>1</sup>

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and you are responsible for keeping it in good health by getting proper rest, food, exercise and knowing and obeying the Word of God. Nutrition is the process of eating foods to provide for the needs of our physical body. Food provides energy and assists growth and repair of tissues. Improper nutrition is a block to healing.

The Bible says that food is given by God, is necessary for man, gives him strength, revives the spirit, is the object of daily prayer, thanksgiving and is sanctified by prayer. See Proverbs 4:20-23; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Psalm 104:14; Leviticus Chapter 11:44-46.

Nutrition is how food affects the health of the body. Food is essential—it provides important nutrients for survival, and it helps the body function and stay healthy. Food is comprised of macronutrients including protein, carbohydrates and fat that not only offer calories to fuel the body and give it energy, but play specific roles in maintaining health. Food also supplies micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) and phytochemicals that don't provide calories but serve a variety of critical functions to ensure the body operates optimally.

## Macronutrients: Protein, Carbohydrates and Fat

**Protein:** Found in beef, pork, chicken, game and wild meats, fish and seafood, eggs, soybeans and other legumes, protein provides the body with amino acids. Amino acids are the building blocks which are needed for growth, development, and repair and maintenance of body tissues. Protein provides structure to muscle and bone, repairs tissues when damaged and helps immune cells fight inflammation and infection.

**Carbohydrates:** The main role of a carbohydrate is to provide energy and fuel the body the same way gasoline fuels a car. Foods such as corn, beans, plantains, rice, tortilla, potatoes and other root vegetables such as yucca, bread and fruit deliver sugars or starches that provide carbohydrates for energy.

Energy allows the body to do daily activities as simple as walking and talking and as complex as running and moving heavy objects. Fuel is needed for growth, which makes sufficient fuel especially important for growing children and pregnant women. Even at rest, the body needs calories to perform important functions such as maintaining body temperature, keeping the heart beating and digesting food.

**Fat:** Dietary fat, which is found in oils, coconut, nuts, milk, cheese, meat, poultry and fish, provides structure to cells and cushions membranes to help prevent damage. Oils and fats are also essential for absorbing vitamins including vitamin A, a nutrient important for healthy eyes and lungs.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources: For Their Life Manual of Be In Health Global; Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Eat Right Pro - Explaining Nutrition; Health for Life Manual for Primary Health Care at YWAM Perth.

## Micronutrients: Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins and minerals are food components that help support overall health and play key roles in cell metabolism (maintaining life) and neurological functions (nerves carry messages throughout the body).

**Vitamins** aid in energy production, wound healing, bone formation, immunity, and eye and skin health.

**Minerals** help maintain cardiovascular health and provide structure to the skeleton.

Consuming a balanced diet including fruits, vegetables, dairy, protein foods and whole or enriched grains helps ensure the body has plenty of nutrients to use.

- **Vitamin A** helps the eyes to see.
- **Calcium and magnesium** help muscles and blood vessels relax, preventing cramps and high blood pressure. Non-dairy calcium containing foods include Kale, Bok Choy, Almonds, Sardines, Salmon, Sesame Seeds, Chia seeds, Tofu, Broccoli.
- **Vitamin C** helps wounds heal and helps the body's ability to fight off germs.
- **Iron** helps the blood transport oxygen throughout the body and prevents anemia (tired, weak).

## Water

The human body is composed of 70% water so drinking adequate amounts of clean, pure water is essential for health. Water helps in digestion, absorption, transport of nutrients, circulation of blood and excretion of waste. Adults require a minimum of 2 quarts or liters of water daily. The requirement for children depends on their weight and age (the average requirement is 100 ml per kilogram).

## 1 + 3 Everyday

Every day we should eat 3 kinds of food in addition to our main energy food. Think of a pot of rice with three supporting legs.

1. Main energy food: rice, corn, or root crops (if we do not get enough of this food we will feel weak and will easily become sick)
2. Growth and body building foods: Proteins (for growth, development, and repair and maintenance of body tissues)
3. Food with many vitamins: Fruits and vegetables (prevent the body from becoming sick)
4. A little Oil (helps the body use the vitamins and helps to give more energy to the body)

Illnesses Caused By Not Eating Enough Foods From Each Group:.

- Lack of Main Energy Foods – thin, and not enough energy to work
- Lack of Protein Foods – diarrhea or measles can become serious quickly in a person lacking protein foods. He will have:
  - Thin, falling hair; light colored hair

- Black peeling spots on the skin
  - Swollen puffy face and legs
  - Mental slowness
- Lack of Fruit and Vegetables - dark green vegetables help to build up the red color in blood and without these the person becomes anemic (the skin, inner eyelids, gums and fingernails become pale). Green and yellow vegetables are important for vision. Lack of them leads to:
  - Poor night vision
  - White spots on the eyes
  - He may become blind
  - He may have cracks at the corner of his mouth
  - He may have infected sores and skin problems
- Lack of Fats and Oils prevents the absorption of some vitamins and can lead to blindness. A little oil or fat is good but too much can harm the body.

#### Prevention of Malnutrition in Children:

- Give nutritious feeds to the mother in pregnancy
- Breastfeed child until he is two years old
- Give nothing but breast milk for first four months
- At four months start giving porridge – rice or corn
- Each week after this add a new food
- By six months the child should eat food from each group every day

#### Advantages of Breastfeeding:

- Bonds mother and child and helps each to love the other
- Is always clean
- Breast feeding does not require a lot of work
- Breast milk always has the right mixture – never too weak or strong
- Protects the baby against many germs and diseases
- Is not expensive

#### It is very difficult to keep a bottle fed baby healthy:

- They are often sick with diarrhea and other illnesses more than breast fed babies
- The bottles and all water that bottle fed babies are given must be boiled and kept clean.
- Baby formula powder is very expensive.
- SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK IS NOT GOOD FOR BABIES.

#### **REFERENCES:**

1. Community Health Education - electronic files from Mercy Works at YWAM Tyler Texas.
2. Health for Life Manual for Primary Health Care at YWAM Perth.