

## Diet

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**Introduction**

Diet? Surely, someone may want to know what “diet” is all about to enable him/her understand and care for his/her health condition day and night. Diet is the kind of food on which a person or community lives. Every diet needs a balance of three main nutrients such as carbohydrates, protein, and fats. The diet that is nutritious, safe, good for weight loss and positive against diabetes and heart disease is the best for health.

**Balanced diet**

A Diet that contains the right amounts of nutrients, vitamins, and minerals is called a balanced diet. There are seven essential factors in the balanced diet such as carbs, protein, fat, fibre, vitamins, minerals and water. A balanced meal must include one food from each food group: Dairy, Vegetables, Fruits, Grains and Protein. When somebody is planning a balanced meal, advisably should try to include “five of five”.

**A healthy diet is key to health and nutrition**

A healthy diet prevents many chronic non - communicable diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Intake of different foods with less consumption of salts, sugars, and saturated and industrially – produced trans fats are important for a healthy diet [1].

A healthy diet is the one that comprises a combination of a variety of foods. For example:

- Staples (cereals and starchy)
- Legumes (beans and lentils)
- Fruit and vegetables
- Foods from animal sources (eggs, fish, meat, and milk).

**WHO’s guide to follow a healthy diet and its benefits****Breastfeed babies and young children**

- A healthy diet begins early in life. Breastfeeding promote healthy growth and long – term health benefits, for instance, reducing the risk factors against overweight or obese and non-communicable diseases in future.
- Exclusive breastfeeding from birth to six months is important for a healthy diet. Meanwhile, to introduce a variety of safe and nutritious complementary foods at six months of age, while continuing breastfeed the child until reach two years old, is also important.

**Intake plenty of fruit and vegetables**

- Fruit and vegetables are important source of vitamins, minerals, dietary fibre, plant protein and antioxidants.
- A diets that are rich in vegetables and fruit reduce significantly the risk of obesity, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and other types of cancer.

**Intake of low amount of fat**

- Utilizing too much of saturated and industrially – produced trans – fat, can promote the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Utilizing unsaturated vegetable oils (olive, soy, sunflower, corn oil) instead of animal fats or oils high in saturated fats (butter, ghee, lard, coconut and palm oil) helps to consume of healthier fats.
- Consumption of total fat less than 30% will help to avoid unhealthy weight gain.

**Low intake of sugars**

- For a healthy diet, sugars should be less than 10% of the total energy intake. However, making it lower than 5% is another health benefits too.
- For less consumption of sugars, fresh fruits are preferred than sweet snacks (cookies, cakes and chocolate).
- Minimize the intake of soft drinks, soda and other drinks that contained too many sugars (fruit juices, cordials and syrups, flavored milk and yogurt) and in reduce intake of sugars.

Limit salt intake to be less than five gram per day (about sodium intake less than two gram per day) help to prevent hypertension, and minimizes the risk of heart disease and stroke in the adult population.

World Health Organization Member States made a resolution to reduce the global population’s intake of salt by 30%, and also to stop the rise in diabetes and obesity in adults and adolescents also as in childhood overweight by 2025.

**Dietary supplements****Dietary supplements for athletes****Medline plus: creatine**

- HHS, National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine

- Study about creatine, what it is all about, accept among athletes, interactions, concern about safety and more.

### **Ephedra and ephedrine alkaloids for weight loss and athletic performance**

- HHS, National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements
- Study about ephedra and ephedrine alkaloids for weight loss and athletes performance.

### **Medline plus: caffeine**

- HHS, National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine
- Study about caffeine, its effects on users, overdose, and reason (s) for causing dehydration – particularly in athletes.

### **Herbal supplements**

#### **Herbal information – FNIC**

- U.S Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Services, National Agricultural Library, Food and Nutrition Center
- Issues a links to comprehensive information and resources about herbals and botanicals utilized as dietary supplements.

#### **Botanical dietary supplements: background information**

- HHS, National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements
- Issues background information about what botanicals are all about, their use, safety and health benefits as dietary supplements.

### **Weight control**

- HHS, National Institutes of Health, National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health
- Issues information about the safety and effectiveness of dietary supplements against weight control.

### **Safety and health claims**

#### **Dietary supplements: adverse event reporting**

- HHS, Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
- Utilize the safety reporting portal to report concerns related to dietary supplements.

### **Miracle health claims**

- Federal Trade Commission, Food and Drug Administration
- Study how to evaluate claims for products related to health, dietary supplements inclusive.

### **Consumer information: dietary supplements**

- Federal Trade Commission
- Study the dietary supplements safety to protect ourselves from fraud and misinformation.

### **Vitamin and Mineral Supplements**

#### **Vitamin and mineral supplements fact sheets**

- National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplement
- Issues an A to Z list of vitamin and mineral supplement fact sheets

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### **Folic acid information and resources**

- U. S Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition, WIC Works Resources System
- Issues a links to information and resources on folic acid supplementation.

### **Diet and Health conditions**

- AIDS/HIV
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Digestive Disorder
- Eating Disorder
- Food Allergies and Intolerances
- Heart Health
- High Blood Pressure
- Kidney Disease
- Osteoporosis
- Overweight and Obesity.

### **Diet and nutrition impact on child's learning ability**

#### **Why good diet and nutrition are important for student performance**

In America most of the available and popular foods in the schools have a negative impact on children's abilities to learn. The foods contained sugar; caffeine, chemicals, and sodium, most of the well-known menu items are making the kids tired, not able to focus, jittery and illness. In addition to impact on student's grades and performance, they also influence their behavior and moods [2].

### **Lack of energy and focus**

Recently, society for Neuroscience revealed that diets that contained more saturated fats are actually impaired learning and memory. Cafeteria staples and French fries, sugary desserts, cheeseburgers; and chicken nuggets, are actually slow down the brain power of the kids before back to their class.

The effects of glucose and sugars in higher – fat foods are one of the theories that explain the link between saturated fats and brain power. As all know, carbohydrates are the source of glucose and glucose is important for energy. So, foods that contain more glucose level actually make the body's energy levels to decline. Once the glucose an intake, the body releases insulin which converts the glucose to energy. Under normal circumstances, after the intake a healthy meal, the glucose levels rise slowly and a body feels energized after due process [2].

Consumption of a high glucose diet on a regular basis may result in damage to kidneys, eyes, blood vessels, and nerves. And off – course, the presence of these side effects is alarming indeed. Similarly, high glucose also causes irritability, lethargy, and lack of focus.

### Food deprivation and malnutrition

As recently estimated in America, one out of three was overweight and both overweight and underweight kids may be deemed as malnourished. Malnutrition/malnourishment refer to a lack of proper food intake and moreover, malnutrition refers to a lack of nutrients.

According to Mary Gavin from the Nemours Foundation, most American children may be taking in a high amount of calories without taking in any essential vitamins, nutrients, and minerals. This situation of not taking in vitamins and minerals leads to what is called detrimental side effects. It is reported that children with insufficient diets have more problems with their health, academic learning, and psychosocial behavior [2].

Once the brain has malnutrition as a long – term neural issues, it impacts a child's emotional responses, reaction to stress, learning disabilities, and other medical complications.

In one of their specific study, researchers Margaret Lahey and Shari Rosen discovered that “Malnourished children delays in vision, fine motor skills, language skills and personal – social skills”.

Some researchers recently discovered that 1/3 was actually reported with poor food habits, chronic illnesses, and lower school achievements. Fast foods for kids are actually inhibiting their development. Research also proves that a poor diet also impacts a child's attitude and behavior within and outside the school [3-5].

### Conclusion

Based on this paper, feeding practices (homes and schools) are the points of concern that should be given serious considerations, attention as well as care. On the other hand, parents/caregivers are needed to be educated on what nutrition is all about and also how to prepare nutritious diets with locally available resources in order to have healthier and brilliant tomorrow's adult population nationwide. So far, so good, a healthy diet is key to kids' health and happiness.

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