

SIGNIFICANCE OF BALANCED DIET

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ABSTRACT

A balanced diet could be simply defined as the food that gives our body the nutrients it needs to function properly. In order to avail truly balanced nutrition, one must obtain the major share of the daily calories from fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins.

Calories are a measure of units of energy. Calorie in a diet or a meal could be defined as the amount of energy conserved in food which is in turn used by the body to perform several activities. Three meals that are consumed by a person in a day should be comprised of six hundred fifty to seven hundred calories each. Again the total intake of calories varies between men and women, children and adults, etc.

Consume a diet based on carbohydrate-rich food such as potatoes, bread and rice; with plenty of fruits and vegetables; foods that are rich in proteins such as fish, lentils and meat; milk and food made of dairy products; and not too much fatty, oily, salt or sugar, and rest assured it would give all the nutrients needed. One should eat a wide variety of food in the right proportions and consume plenty of water to achieve and maintain healthy body weight.

Keywords – Protein, Fat, Carbohydrates, Balanced diet, Energy, Nutrition

INTRODUCTION

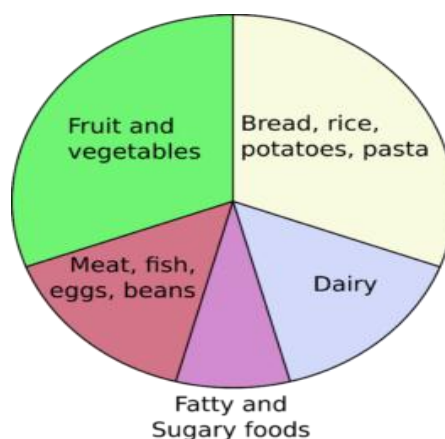
When it comes to your diet, the most current advice is perhaps the kind that begins with 'eat less' or 'restrict fat'. I've never been convinced and I'm not alone. Most of us may feel overwhelmed with conflicting nutrition and diet opinions but I've learnt that deprivation is not the solution, creating a balance is. It is essential to get the right type and amount of foods to support a healthy lifestyle. A diet that focuses on providing all the nutrients that your body needs. It comprises of macronutrients like protein, carbohydrates and fat along with micronutrients which include vitamins and minerals. Each of them has a different role to play in maintaining various body functions.

These nutrients are derived through a combination of the five major food groups - fruits and vegetables, cereals and pulses, meat and dairy products and fats and oils. The rules for a balanced diet seem simple but that's not the whole story - how much do you need daily, when is the best time to eat proteins or carbohydrates and what should the portion size be?

- **Objective:** The paper aims to understand the role of balanced diet in human life
- **Materials and Methods-** The present paper uses the following methods for the purpose of analysis. After decades of steady decline, the trend in world hunger – as measured by the prevalence of undernourishment – reverted in the year 2015, remaining virtually unchanged in the past three years at a level slightly **below 11 %**, posing a challenge to achieving the **SDG Goal 2** (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture).

DISCUSSIONS: IMPORTANCE OF BALANCED DIET

A diet is all that we consume in a day. And a balanced diet is a diet that contains an adequate quantity of the nutrients that we require in a day. A balanced diet includes six main nutrients, i.e. Fats, Protein, Carbohydrates, Fiber, Vitamins, and Minerals.



All these nutrients are present in the foods that we eat. Different food items have different proportions of nutrients present in them. The requirements of the nutrients depend on the age, gender, and health of a person.

The following are the importance of a balanced diet :

- Balanced Diet leads to a good physical and a good mental health.
- It helps in proper growth of the body.
- Also, it increases the capacity to work
- Balanced diet increases the ability to fight or resist diseases.

COMPONENTS OF A BALANCED DIET

Some components of a balanced diet are as follows: **Fats:** Some part of our energy requirement is fulfilled by fats. Fats can be found in fatty foods such as butter, ghee, oil, cheese, etc. **Proteins:** We need proteins for growth purposes and to repair the wear and tear of the body. Protein also helps in building muscle. It is found in dairy products, sprouts, meat, eggs, chicken, etc. **Carbohydrates:** We need the energy to process and it is fulfilled by carbohydrates. Carbs provide us energy. Carbohydrates can be found in rice, wheat, chapati, bread, etc. Cereals are our staple food. **Minerals and Vitamins:** Vitamins, Minerals, and Fibre improve the body's resistance to disease. We mainly obtain it from vegetables and fruits. Deficiency diseases like Anemia, Goitre, etc can be caused due to lack of mineral in the body.

- Hunger is on the rise in almost all African subregions, making **Africa** the region with the **highest** prevalence of undernourishment, at almost 20 %.
 - In Asia, despite great progress in the last five years, **Southern Asia** is still the subregion where the prevalence of undernourishment is **highest**, at almost 15 %.
 - It is projected that undernutrition will **reduce** Gross Domestic Product (**GDP**) by up to 11 % in Africa and Asia.
 - Most countries (65 out of 77) that experienced a rise in undernourishment between 2011 and 2017 simultaneously suffered an **economic slowdown** or downturn.
 - Economic shocks have also prolonged and worsened the impact of conflict and climate events on acute food insecurity.
2. **Breastfeeding:** Only 40% of infants under six months are exclusively breastfed, which is far from the 2030 target of 70 %.
 3. **Low Birth weight:** No progress has been made in reducing the prevalence of low birth weight since 2012. One in seven live births, or 20.5 million babies globally, suffered from low birth weight in 2015.
 4. **Stunting:** The number of stunted children has declined by 10% over the past six years. In the year 2018, Africa and Asia accounted for more than nine out of ten of all stunted children globally, representing 39.5% and 54.9 % of the global total, respectively.
 5. **Food Insecurity:** About 2 billion people in the world experience moderate or severe food insecurity.
 6. In every continent, the prevalence of food insecurity is slightly higher among women than men, with the largest differences found in Latin America.
 7. **Moderate food insecurity:** People experiencing moderate food insecurity face uncertainties about their ability to obtain food, and have been forced to compromise on the quality and/or quantity of the food they consume.
 8. **Severe food insecurity:** People experiencing severe food insecurity have typically run out of food and, at worst, gone a day (or days) without eating.
 9. **Obesity:** Overweight and obesity continue to increase in all regions, particularly among school-age children and adults. In 2018, an estimated 40 million children under five were overweight.
 10. Throughout the world, most school-age children do not eat enough fruit or vegetables, regularly consume fast food and carbonated soft drinks, and are not physically active on a daily basis.
 11. **Anaemia:** It currently affects 33 % of women of reproductive age – more than double the 2030 target of 15 %.

INDIA SPECIFIC FINDINGS

- The prevalence of **undernourishment** in India **declined** from 22.2% in 2004-06 to 14.5% between 2016 and 2018.
- In Southern Asia, food insecurity increased from less than 11% in 2017 to more than 14% in 2018. This possibly reflects an increase in the unemployment rate in India between 2017 and 2018, and especially in Pakistan, where growth is expected to slow down significantly.

- In the Indian Himalayas, economic slowdown coupled with natural resource depletion and climate change negatively impacted on food production and employment opportunities. This resulted in increased threats to food security due to lower purchasing power.

CONCLUSION

A healthy diet is one that helps maintain or improve overall health. A healthy diet provides the body with essential nutrition: fluid, macronutrients, micronutrients, and adequate calories.^{[1][2]}

A healthy diet may contain fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and includes little to no processed food and sweetened beverages. The requirements for a healthy diet can be met from a variety of plant-based and animal-based foods, although a non-animal source of vitamin B12 is needed for those following a vegan diet.^[3] Various nutrition guides are published by medical and governmental institutions to educate individuals on what they should be eating to be healthy. Nutrition facts labels are also mandatory in some countries to allow consumers to choose between foods based on the components relevant to health.

SUGGESTIONS

- Reducing gender inequalities and those inequalities arising from social discrimination.
- Creating synergies between poverty reduction, hunger and malnutrition eradication.
- Policies to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and to increase the availability and affordability of nutritious foods that constitute a healthy diet are required, along with measures to create healthier food environments and limit consumption of harmful fats, salt and sugars.
- Safeguarding food security and nutrition through economic and social policies that help counteract the effects of economic slowdowns or downturns, including guaranteeing funding of social safety nets and ensuring universal access to health and education.
- To keep your body running smoothly, you require three main meals coupled with healthy snacking to curb cravings. Ideally, breakfast should be the heaviest meal of the day but with our busy schedules all we manage to do is chug a glass of milk and grab a toast. When your day starts on a light note followed by a hurried lunch, you end up eating much more for dinner than needed. While dinner should be the lightest, in a common Indian household, it is an elaborate family meal. Time to change. The components of the balanced diet remain the same, the difference lies in how they're served at every meal. Dr. Gargi Sharma guides us to create an ideal routine.
- A good morning meal should comprise of three things. These are dietary fiber or carbohydrates (whole-grain bread, oatmeal, white oats, wheat flakes), proteins (eggs and egg whites, yoghurt, milk and sprouts) and nuts (almonds, walnuts, apricots and figs). This way you'll eat fewer calories the rest of the day.
- Make it a mix of high-fibre whole grains like brown rice, barley or jowar, starchy carbs and some good source of proteins like cottage cheese, pulses, chicken or fish. Include some probiotics like yoghurt or buttermilk and fibre from fresh salads to complete your meal.
- To maintain a healthy balanced diet, pick foods with a high satiety value that keep you full for longer and curb midnight bingeing. Fill your plate with greens to load up on vitamins and minerals. Limit carbs but don't cut them off. Combine them with some healthy fats like fish, nuts and seed oils. Your body can use these for regeneration and repair overnight
- Don't give up on snacking. It supplies the quick 'pick-me-up' you need. Trade the junk for fresh fruits, crudité's with hung curd dip, nuts or a salad. Eating small yet frequent meals is the ideal way. This doesn't mean you eat more but spread your daily requirements throughout the day.
- When you eat is as important as what you eat. The key to smooth digestion lies in the timing of the meals. Dr. Shikha Sharma pinpoints the optimum time to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner. "The first meal of the day should be taken about one and a half hours after waking up. Further, there should at least be a three-hour gap between breakfast and lunch and the same between lunch and teatime. Dinner is best enjoyed two hours before your sleep time to allow the body to wrap up the digestion process," she recommends

FOUR MANTRA FOR ALL TO START A BALANCED DIET RIGHT AWAY

1. The vitamins and minerals you consume from a wider range of foods help maintain your cells, tissues, and organs.
2. A good diet keeps you fit, allows you to maintain a healthy weight, reduces the fat percentage in your body, and gives you energy.
3. Proper nutrition leads to improved immunity, thus ensuring that you don't fall sick too often.

4. A well-balanced meal helps in improved brain functions and keeps your mind active.

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