

Editorial on Balanced Diet

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INTRODUCTION

A balanced diet is one which provides all the nutrients to the body in required amounts in terms of quality and quantity. This diet comprises of all the food groups namely:

- 1) Cereals, millets and pulses
- 2) Vegetables and fruits
- 3) Milk and milk products, egg, meat and fish
- 4) Oils & fats and nuts & oilseeds.

Requirements are the quantities of nutrients obtained from food, that a healthy individuals needs to function physiological activities. However, the requirement of nutrients varies from one individual to another depending on one's health condition.

Health benefits of a balanced diet

Healthy eating provides required energy, improves the body functions, strengthens immune system and aids in healthy weight maintenance.

- Meets nutritional requirements of the body and avoid nutritional deficiencies.
- Healthful eating can prevent the risk of developing certain health complications such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease etc.
- Following a special diet can reduce symptoms, and may help one to better manage an illness or condition.
- Food is an important aspect in many social and cultural

events. Apart from nutrition properties, it helps facilitate connections and bond between individuals.

General guidelines for healthy eating

- The most important rule of healthy eating is not to skip any meal. Skipping meals lowers metabolic rate. Most importantly, one should never skip breakfast as it is the foremost vital meal of the day.
- Adapt easy meal preparation ways. Consume more raw foods such as salads, fruits and vegetable juices, and focus on the pleasure of eating healthy food rather than the calories.
- Conscious eating will help one to maintain weight to an extent.
- Drink lots of water. Keep a bottle of water near working place, watching TV etc., as a reminder.
- Monotony should be avoided. No single food has all the nutrients.
- Consume all the 4 food groups in adequate proportions at different meals of the day.
- Intake of caffeine, refined sugars, processed foods and alcohol, should be limited.
- Consumption of outside or junk food should be limited to once a week.
- Likes and dislikes should be considered while consumption of food. Don't force yourself to eat foods that you dislike just because they are good for your health.

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