

Basic definitions in Nutrition

Nutrition - the sum of the processes involved with the intake of nutrients as well as assimilating and using them to maintain body tissue and provide energy; a foundation for life and health.

Nutrition Science - the body of science, developed through controlled research that relates to the processes involved in nutrition-internationally, clinically and in the community.

Dietetics - management of diet and the use of food; the science concerned with the nutrition planning and preparation of food.

Health - a state of optimal physical, mental, and social well-being; relative freedom from disease or disability.

Metabolism - the sum of all chemical changes that take place in the body by which it maintains itself and produces energy for its functioning.

Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) - nutrient recommendations for each gender and age group that can be used for assessing and planning diets for healthy populations.

Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDAs) - recommended daily allowances of nutrients and energy intake for population groups according to age and sex, with defined weight and height.

My Pyramid - a visual pattern of the current basic five food groups (bread/cereal/vegetable, fruit, milk/cheese, meat/dry beans/egg), arranged in pyramid shape to indicate proportionate amounts of daily food choices.

Colostrums - a thin, yellow fluid first secreted by the mammary gland a few days after childbirth, preceding the mature breast milk. It contains up to 20% protein, including a large amount of lactalbumin, more minerals and less lactose and fat than mature milk, as well as immunoglobulin that represent the antibodies found in maternal blood.

Weaning - to accustom a young child gradually to food other than the mother's milk or a bottle-fed substitute formula as a child's natural need to suckle wanes.

Nutrition & Health

Freedom from hunger and malnutrition is a basic human right and their alleviation is a fundamental prerequisite for human and national development. WHO has traditionally focused on the vast magnitude of the many forms of nutritional deficiency, along with their associated mortality and morbidity in infants, young children and mothers. However, the world is also seeing a dramatic increase in other forms of malnutrition characterized by obesity and the long-term implications of unbalanced dietary and lifestyle practices that result in chronic disease such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes.

Although the science of nutrition is relatively young, we know about what nutrients are needed for an adequate diet and what foods provide them. Recent evidence points to poor diet as a risk factor for chronic diseases that are leading causes of adult deaths : heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes and forms of cancer. Not consuming enough nutrients also makes up more likely to suffer consequences of poor nutrition habits in later years, such as bone fractures from the disease osteoporosis. Iron-deficiency anaemia is another possibility. At the same time, taking too much of a nutrient supplement - such as Vitamin A, vitamin D, Vitamin B-6, calcium or copper-can be harmful. Another dietary problem, drinking too much alcohol, is associated with cirrhosis of the liver, some forms of cancer, accidents, and suicides. All of these consequences of modern living are partly an "affliction of affluence". The combination of poor diet and lack of physical activity is indirectly the

second leading cause of death. If we gain understanding about our nutritional habits and increase knowledge about nutrition, we have the opportunity to dramatically cut risk for many of these problems.

A poor diet can have an injurious impact of health, causing deficiency disease such as scurvy, beriberi, and kwashiorkor, health - conditions like obesity and metabolic syndrome, and such common chronic systemic disease as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and osteoporosis. All forms of malnutrition's broad spectrum are associated with significant morbidity, mortality and economic costs, particularly in countries where both under-and over nutrition co-exist as is the case in developing countries undergoing rapid transition in nutrition and life-style.

According to WHO, "Nutrition is an input to and foundation for health and development". Better nutrition means stronger immune systems, less illness and better health. Healthy children learn better. Healthy people are stronger, are more productive and more able to create opportunities to gradually break the cycles of both poverty and hunger in a sustainable way. Better nutrition is a prime entry point to ending poverty and a milestone to achieving better quality of life.

By definition, the word "nutrition" means the process of nourishing or being nourished, specifically the process by which a living organism assimilates food and uses it for growth and replacement of tissues. Nutrition also called nourishment or aliment is the provision of the materials necessary in the form of food to cells and organisms to support life. Many common health problems can be prevented or alleviated with a healthy diet.

The diet of an organism is what it eats, and is largely determined by the perceived palatability of foods. Dieticians are health professionals who specialize in human nutrition, meal planning, economics, preparation

and so on. They are trained to provide safe, evidence-based dietary advice and management to individuals in health and disease, as well as to institutions.
