

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.