



Balanced diet
and food
groups

Introduction

- Most of the people do not have access to food composition tables, nor knowledge or time to look into the nutrient content of foods they normally consume.
- People need to be guided about balancing the intake of different nutrients in their diet and make healthy food choices.

- Food groups classify foods into categories, depending upon their type, nutritional contribution and functions.
- These food groups can be used to plan diets which achieve nutrient intakes according to RDA

Concept of balanced diet

- It is trying to balance the amount of different types of foods eaten everyday so that it becomes a nutritionally adequate diet.
- A balanced diet is one that includes foods from all food groups during the day. The quantities and proportions of these foods need to be such that they fulfil our daily requirements for all nutrients.

- In addition the nutrients should be in such amounts that a little bit can be stored in the body to take care of the days when food intake is insufficient.
- Balanced diet usually provide 50-60% energy from carbohydrates, 10-15% energy from proteins and 20-30% energy from fats.
- In addition diet should provide macronutrients and other protective substances like phytochemicals in sufficient quantities needed for maintaining optimum health.

Basic food groups

- Foods can be grouped into categories based on the type or nutrients that they supply.
- The basic food group classification is based on the physiological role played by the foods of each group in our body.

- Thus we have
 - Energy giving foods- cereal grains, fats & oils, sugar and products made from these foods
 - Body building foods – pulses, nuts, oilseeds, milk & milk products, meat, fish, poultry and products made from these.
 - Protective foods – fruits and vegetables which supply vitamins and minerals

- ICMR classifies foods into five groups

Food group	Main nutrient supplied	Other nutrients present
Cereal grains & products	Energy, protein	Invisible fat, B vitamins, iron, calcium, fibre
Pulses and legumes	Protein, energy	Invisible fat, B vitamins, iron, calcium, fibre
Milk & meat products	Protein,	Fat, riboflavin, calcium, vitamin B ₁₂ , fat soluble vitamins
Fruits & vegetables	Vitamins, minerals and fibre	Invisible fat, trace minerals and vitamins
Fat & sugars	Energy	Essential fatty acids

Pulses and legumes



Milk & meat products



Fat & sugars



Cereal grains & products



Fruits & vegetables

How the food group system helps us

- As a tool for nutritional assessment
- As a tool for nutrition education
- Planning diets for normal healthy people
- In providing variety to the diet
- Planning therapeutic diets
- In formulation of nutrition labels

The Food Pyramid

