

# Introduction to healthy eating- Food Based Dietary Guidelines



Nutrition Division  
Ministry of Health



# Food

- Food is what we eat and drink
- consists of –
  - carbohydrate
  - protein
  - fat
  - minerals
  - vitamins
  - water
  - non-nutritive compounds (e.g. phytochemicals, fibre)



1. Gives us energy (mainly from carbohydrate and fat)



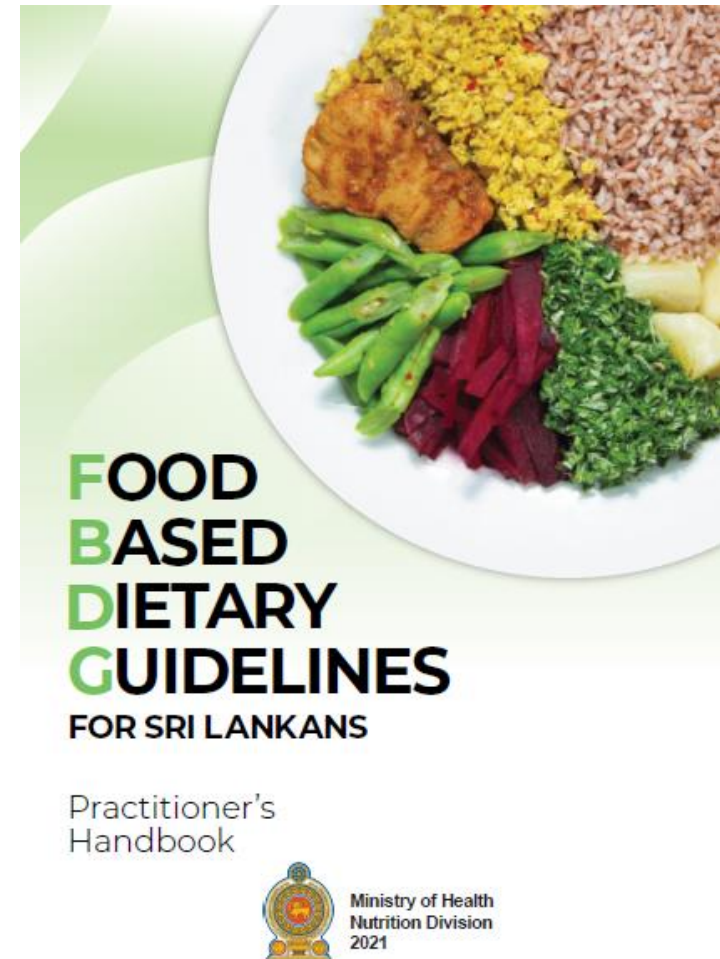
2. Helps to grow, maintain and function (mainly from protein)



3. Protect us from illnesses (mainly from vitamins, minerals, fibre)

# Food Based Dietary Guidelines for Sri Lankans

- **Provide information on:**
  - Major food groups in our diet
  - Recommended servings of each food group
  - Foods that should be reduced or avoided
  - Healthy dietary practices
- **Intended for healthy adults**



# 14 general guidelines – for healthy adults

1	Add colour to your daily meals balancing the correct amounts	8	<b>Limit</b> sugary drinks, biscuits, cakes, sweets and sweeteners
2	Eat whole grains and their products including less polished or parboiled rice, instead of refined grains and their products	9	Water is the healthiest drink: drink 8 to 10 glasses (1.5-2.0 liters) throughout the day
3	Eat at least 2 vegetables, one green leafy vegetable and 2 fruits daily	10	Be active; engage in moderate intensity physical activity for at least 150-300 minutes per week
4	Eat fish or egg or lean meat with pulses at every meal	11	Sleep 7-8 hours continuously everyday
5	Have fresh milk or its fermented products.	12	Eat clean and safe food
6	Eat a handful of nuts or oily seeds daily.	13	Eat fresh and home cooked food: <b>limit</b> processed and ultra processed foods
7	<b>Limit</b> salty foods and adding salt to food.	14	Always read labels of packaged food

---

## 4 specific guidelines

---

- 1** Consume more pulses, sprats, small fish, egg, meat as well as fruits & vegetables during pregnancy & lactation
  - 2** Exclusively breastfeed infants till completion of 6 months of age and continue age appropriate breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to 2 years of age or beyond.
  - 3** Children and adolescents require more fish or egg or lean meat with pulses, and vegetables& fruits.
  - 4** The elderly need more more fish, eggs, lean meat or pulses, and vegetables & fruits
-

# Food Based Dietary Guideline

**Add colours to  
your daily meals  
balancing the  
correct amounts**

---



# The six food groups

- Food groups are a collection of food that share similar nutritional properties or biological classifications.
- There are six food groups that add variety to the diet.



**6. Nuts, oily seeds & oils**



**1. Cereals & starchy foods**



**2. Vegetables & Green leaves**



**5. Fresh milk & it's fermented products**



**4. Fruits**



**3. Pulses, fish, egg & lean meat**

Food group	Types of food
<p>1. Cereals &amp; starchy food</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cereals and their products Cereals – e.g. rice, wheat, millet, maize Cereal products – e.g. string hoppers, pittu, roti, bread</li> <li>• Starchy food: Yams and tubers – e.g. potato, manioc, sweet potato, Kiri ala Jackfruit and breadfruit</li> </ul>
<p>2. Vegetables and green leaves</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vitamin A rich vegetables – e.g. pumpkin, carrot, butternut squash</li> <li>• Other vegetables including root vegetables – e.g. beans, long bean, snake gourd, drumstick, beetroot, raddish</li> <li>• Green leaves – e.g. Kathurumurunga, Drumstick leaves, Thampala, Gotukola</li> </ul>
<p>3. Pulses/ Fish/ Egg/ Lean meat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pulses – e.g. chickpea, cowpea, soya, lentils</li> <li>• Fish/Seafood/ Dried fish/ Poultry/ Lean meat – e.g. all fresh and marine water fish, prawns, cuttle fish, chicken, pork, beef, sprats, dried fish</li> <li>• Egg – e.g. hen, quail, duck</li> </ul>




Food group	Types of food
4. Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e.g. banana, mango, papaya, pineapple, Lovi, Jambu, Veralu, Anoda, Beli</li> </ul>
5. Fresh milk & its fermented products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e.g. fresh milk, curd, yoghurt, cheese</li> </ul>
6. Nuts, oily seeds and oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy nuts and oily seeds – e.g. peanuts, cashew nuts, gingelly, Kottang</li> <li>• Coconuts – e.g. scraped, kernel, coconut milk</li> <li>• Oils and fats – e.g. coconut oil, corn oil, gingelly oil, butter and fat spreads</li> </ul>

Starchy food, fresh milk and its fermented products add variety to the diet; but are not necessary to be a part of the daily diet.

They can be consumed based on preference within the recommended amounts

## Balanced diet

- Sum of food to be consumed by a person throughout the day in recommended amounts
- Fulfills daily energy and nutrient requirements of a person.
- Prevents a range of disease conditions including all forms of malnutrition.
- Food that are essential to be taken daily in recommended amounts
  - cereals,
  - vegetables and green leaves,
  - fruits,
  - pulses, fish/egg/lean meat,
  - nuts and oily seeds



## How much should be consumed from each food group?

- Serving - standardized amount of food recommended to be consumed from each food group.
- Number of servings defines - daily recommended amount of food to be consumed from each food group



## Recommended servings

- depend on the;
  - activity level,
  - age,
  - physiological status and
  - gender of the person.
- The lowest number of servings recommended for:
  - a sedentary woman (energy intake of 1600kcal per day)
- The highest number for:
  - a very active man (energy intake of 2600kcal per day).

# Serving sizes

	<b>Food Group</b>	<b>Servings / day</b>	<b>One serving equals to</b>
01	<b>Cereals &amp; starchy foods</b>	8 - 13	½ cup
02	<b>Vegetables and Green leaves</b>		
	Vegetables	2-4	½ cup or 3 tbsp
	Green leaves	1	½ cup or 3 tbsp
03	<b>Pulses/ Fish / Egg /lean meat</b>		
	Plant protein (Pulses)	3 – 5	½ cup / 3 tbsp
	Animal protein ( fish /lean meat)	2 - 4	30 g / one piece with a size of 2 boxes of matches(2 cm* 3 cm* 4 cm)
	Egg	1	1 egg

Servings are measured by;

- Teacup = 200ml
- 1 tablespoon (tbsp) = 15 ml/g
- 1 teaspoon (tsp) = 5 ml / g
- Size of a match box = 4 cm x 3 cm x 1 cm

# Serving sizes

	Food Group	Servings / day	One serving equals to
<b>04</b>	<b>Fruits</b>	2 – 4	1 small fruit or 100 g
<b>05</b>	<b>Fresh milk &amp; its fermented products</b>	½ – 1	1 cup ( 200 ml)
<b>06</b>	<b>Nuts , oily seeds &amp; oil</b>		
	Nuts and oily seeds	2	1 tbsp (~ 15 g)
	oils	1-3	1 tsp (5 ml)
	Coconut (scrapped/kernel/milk)	3 -6	1 tbsp (~ 15 g)

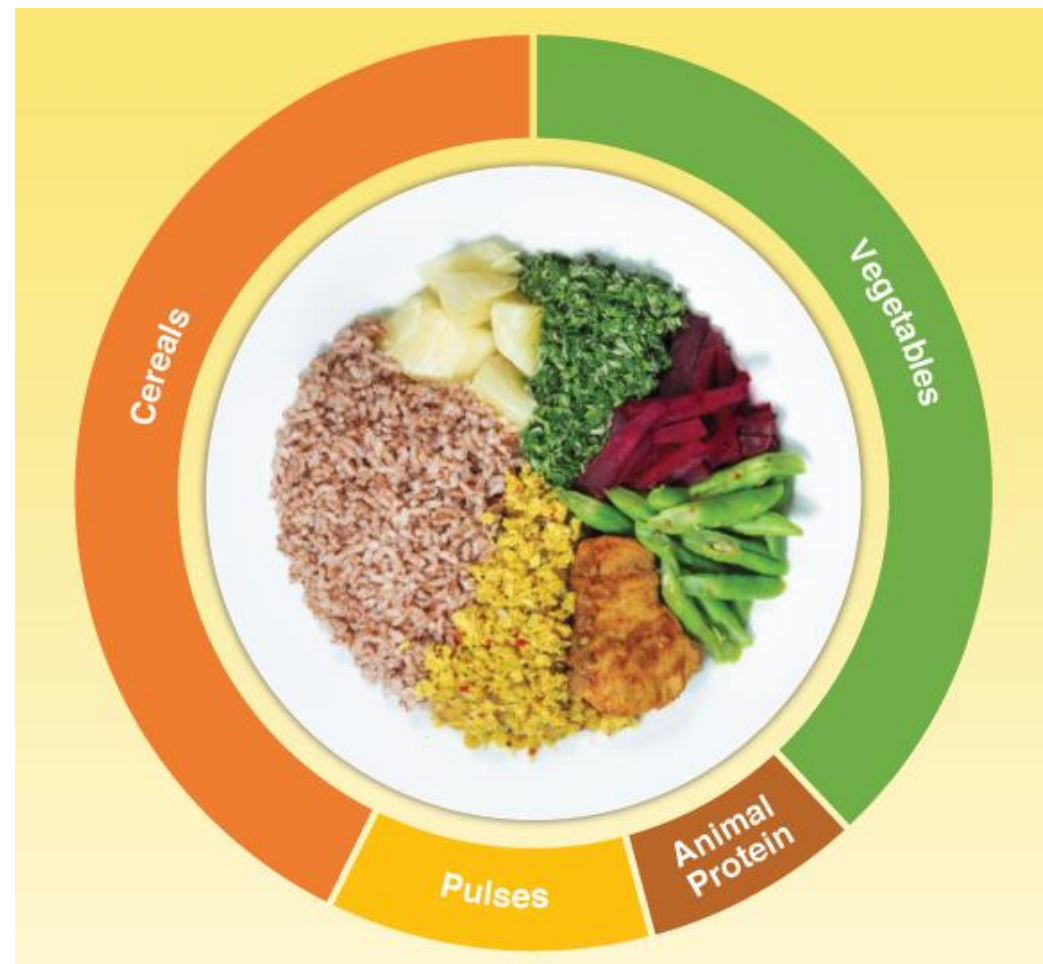
## Servings are measured by;

- Teacup = 200ml
- 1 tablespoon (tbsp) = 15 ml/g
- 1 teaspoon (tsp) = 5 ml / g
- Size of a match box = 4 cm x 3 cm x 1 cm



# Model food plate for a healthy Sri Lankan adult

1. 1/2 of the plate - cereals and starchy food (rice and yams/jack fruit/breadfruit etc.).
2. 2/3 of other half of the plate – at least 2 vegetables and one green leafy vegetable.
3. Rest of the plate (1/3 of the other half) – protein sources food; out of which 2/3 should be from plant sources of protein and 1/3 from animal sources of protein.



# Model food plate for Sri Lankans



- If consuming starchy food (e.g. boiled/curried yams, jackfruit, breadfruit) with rice; reduce the amount of rice proportionately.
- Select a variety of food throughout the week.
- Select natural food of different flavours, textures and colours; it improves taste, nutritional value and appetite.
- Fruit can be a healthy snack, when necessary



## Eat healthy snacks if needed

- Have one or two healthy snacks per day
- 2 - 3 hours gap to be maintained between a meal and a snack

### Some examples of healthy snacks

- Whole fresh fruits – 1 medium size
- Handful of nuts or oily seeds (cashew, peanuts, kottang, pumpkin seeds, sesame)
- Boiled gram/green gram – ½ cup
- Corn on the cob – 1
- Vegetable sticks – Carrots, cucumber – ½ cup
- Yoghurt (preferably unsweetened) - 1 cup
- Dried fruits – 1 table spoon
- Popcorn (unsalted, without sugar and flavours) – 1 cup
- Herbal porridge (*Kolakenda*) – 1 glass
- Tea/coffee without sugar - 1 cup



**THE END**