



Made-in-India Diet 2021

Just imagine a pendulum in your mind oscillating between what I would like to eat and what I should eat? And when you give it a thought, you know there has to be a balance in what you eat, and the pendulum must stop at the centre. But the pendulum almost always stops on the side where you decide to eat what you like. Most striking part is that we know it is wrong but we fail to alter it. Sometimes you can listen to your heart when it comes to food but not always.

To help and guide you in the right decision making, here comes the 'Aahaar Kranti' for the well being of each one of us. It aims to create nutritional awareness in all sections of our society.

OBJECTIVE OF AAHAAR KRANTI

To promote better awareness, better nutrition and better agriculture.

Aahaar Kranti helps educate the people about:

- values of India's traditional diet
- healing powers of local fruits and vegetables
- miracles of a balanced diet

It is an indigenous initiative made by Vijnan Bharati and Global Indian Scientists' and Technocrats' Forum (GIST). They have come together to launch the programme Aahaar Kranti, with the motto-*Uttam Aahaar, Uttam Vichaar*. Aahaar Kranti Initiative is also supported by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)'s Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (Prabhaas) and various central and state government ministries and agencies.

Uttam Aahaar is one that provides all nutrients in required amount and proportions for maintaining good health and general well being and makes small provision for extra nutrients to withstand short duration of illness. A balanced diet which provides all the nutrients is needed throughout our lives at all ages. They must be obtained through a judicious choice and





combination of a variety of foodstuffs from different food groups.

Aahaar Kranti initiative will help you understand the basic concept of balanced diet which includes macronutrients that are required in large amounts like carbohydrates, fats and proteins and micronutrients that are required in small quantities like vitamins and minerals. These nutrients are necessary for the human body to acquire, assimilate and utilize food to maintain health and activity.

Balanced Diet Mantra

Dr Seema Puri, Associate Professor from Department of Nutrition at Institute of Home Economics in University of Delhi mentions three Mantras that matter with food: Balance, variety and moderation.”

These mantras must be inculcated in our lives from birth or from early childhood. We all need nutrition, but early childhood needs proper nutrition investment.

WHAT IS A BALANCED DIET?

A balanced diet is one which provides all the nutrients in required amounts and proper proportions. It can easily be achieved through a blend of the four basic food groups.

Dr Alok Kumar Agarwal, Consultant Paediatrician at Lal Bahadur Shastri hospital emphasises that, “Proper nutrition in first 1000 days (270 days of pregnancy and 2 years, i.e., 730 days of child’s life) have permanent bearing on the health of the individual throughout life. Exclusive breast feeding for first 6 months after birth followed by proper complimentary feeding is very crucial for developing brain. By one year of age, the child should be eating around 250 ml, 4-5 times per day from family pot. This should provide around 1000-1200 kcal along with 15-20 gram of proteins. By 10-16 years of age, a child requires 2100-2700 kcal from diet which should include 54-78 gram of proteins, 500-600

mg of calcium and 30-50 mg of iron. This varies with age and physical activity level of the child. Children undernourished during this period are far more likely to suffer from long-term health problems, poorer educational performance, and lower economic prosperity.”

It all begins even before the birth of a child when we take care of a would-be mother. So, during pregnancy a woman should eat the best. That is why it is often said and believed that a pregnant woman should eat for two.

But, Dr Puri clarifies, “While nutritional requirements of pregnant women increase during pregnancy, the increase is not double and varies during the course of pregnancy. During the first trimester there is a greater need for proteins and micronutrients for development of organs. During the third trimester, emphasis is on increasing the birthweight of the baby, so the mother should have higher energy diets or foods like panjiri.”

She also mentions that too much tea or coffee could provide substantial amounts of caffeine which is detrimental to the development of the baby and therefore should be avoided.

Dr Agarwal strictly warns that “Junk food including cold drinks, burgers, fries should best be avoided as they give empty calories in the form of carbohydrates and fats only, thus leading to obesity.”

Balanced Diet and gender

Making the right choice of food is most important. As a child always needs assistance to understand and build good eating habits, it is our responsibility to guide them. But being an adult, what do we understand about our diet. Let's start with the basics of what differs in diet of a man and woman.

Dr. Hemalatha R., Director of ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition in Hyderabad explains, “The definition of balanced diet remains same for both genders. However, the nutrient requirement varies with age, gender, activity and physiological status. To meet

this varied requirement the portion sizes of each food group needs to be changed.”

She also decodes the science of calorie intake based on gender. “A sedentary adult man requires 2110 Kcal and a sedentary woman requires 1660 Kcal. Though the calorie requirement is lesser for women, their micronutrient requirement may be higher. For instance the iron requirement for adult men is 11mg/day while it is 15 mg/day for adult women and 21 mg/day during pregnancy. Similarly, during lactation the calcium requirement of women becomes higher.”

Balanced diet and ageing

If we understand the concept of balanced eating, the purpose of Aahaar Kranti will be fulfilled. This revolutionary programme aims at well being of all age groups. Because, a healthy child develops into a healthy adult and in turn has a healthy ageing.

Dr Hemalatha R. explains, “In elderly people metabolism is altered and also their food consumption is affected due to various factors. Due to decreased food

consumption their micronutrient status is compromised along with their muscle mass. Though the calorie requirement is less due to decreased physical activity, their requirement of protein and micronutrients, especially vitamin D and calcium, remains higher.”

So, how can the elderly meet these requirements? Dr Hemalatha suggests, “they should include fresh foods, fruits and milk in their daily diet. Their diet should be made soft, easily digestible and palatable. In addition to the diet regular physical activity is important to retain muscle mass and utilize the micronutrients obtained from diet or supplements.”

Another aspect of balanced diet is how it differs for a vegetarian and a non-vegetarian. Dr Hemalatha says, “While the definition of balanced diet remains same for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians, only the source of protein varies. The vegetarians can obtain protein from pulses, legumes regularly while non-vegetarians can exchange one portion of these with flesh foods or





eggs or fishes. Fish can be consumed 2-3 times in a week. Apart from these food groups, milk and milk products are rich sources of protein for both vegetarians and non vegetarians.

The UN General Assembly has designated 2021 the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables (IYFV). Aahaar Kranti initiative will renew the focus on nutritionally balanced diets-*Uttam evam santulit aahaar* replete in locally sourced fruits and vegetables. Fresh fruits and vegetables provide nutrients for energy and health maintenance, and to combat disease. Describing the role of fruits and vegetables in our diet, Dr Hemalatha explains that “Fruits and vegetables are essential sources of micronutrients such as Vitamins and Minerals and fibre while being low in calories. Vegetables

have complex carbohydrates that make them low in Glycemic Index, which prevents spike in blood glucose level. The high fibre content improves the gut microflora and aids immune function. Fruits and vegetables are also rich in phytochemicals that have antioxidant functions and protect our body from degenerative diseases.”

Fruits and vegetables constitute one of the three food groups in the balanced diet. These are the protective food group, i.e., these foods are rich in micronutrients and help in building immunity, maintain eyes, skin, lips, etc. and protect from infections, e.g. They have vitamin A, vitamin D etc. The more colour more beneficial they are. WHO has run a campaign, The 5 A Day, which recommends eating a minimum

HOW TO IMPART MESSAGE OF AHAAR KRANTI?

- In the form of what's and why's of nutrition
- In the form of games
- As instructions such as 'how to'
- Content will be provided both online and offline
- Content will be in all vernacular languages besides English and Hindi to reach out to as many people as possible.

Aahaar Kranti will focus on training teachers, who, in turn, will pass on the message to the multitudes of students, and through them to their families and finally the society at large. Such a strategy was adopted for the eradication of Polio and it turned out to be a grand success.

of 400 gram of fruit and vegetables a day to lower the risk of serious health problems, such as heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer.

Dr Puri, gives a simple message, “Eat 5 different coloured fruits and vegetables everyday”. She even discards the general belief of not eating fruits and vegetables at night. She says, “I feel fresh fruits can be taken anytime of the day but always in moderation.”

Experts even explain that while consuming fruits and vegetables variety is as important as quantity. No single fruit or vegetable provides all of the nutrients you need to be healthy..

Dr Agarwal, prefers whole fruit instead of fruit juices to be given to children for complete nutrition.

Eating a healthy diet is all about feeling great, having more energy, improving your health, and boosting your mood. India has the unique advantage of having the knowledge of Ayurveda that has a special place for diet in health. It is time to also apply this rich knowledge of nutrition to practice. Aahaar Kranti mission focuses on this. In the end, remember-Nutrition is subjective while Balanced diet is objective. Choose your food wisely and enjoy great health.

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