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# Public Access to Health Information





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# Nutrition for Good Health





# A library programme on nutrition

- Information on nutrition is already likely to be in the library in the form of cookery books. These make an important contribution.
- The essential facts on good diet for babies, growing children and old people need to be reinforced
- Sources of information and advice can be highlighted by the library



# The role of tradition

- Nutrition is an area in which traditional knowledge is almost always right.
- When people were dependent on their own gardens, fields and flocks they usually chose a good diet with a healthy balance of locally available vegetable and animal foods.
- In contrast, the modern diet is influenced by advertising, processed foods and unhealthy levels of salt, sugar and other flavour-giving substances.



# Feeding babies

- The message that there is no real substitute for mother's milk needs to be reinforced.
  - It not only provides the right kind of nourishment, but
  - It protects against infections, and
  - Contributes to good family spacing.
- The library can contribute to programmes to support and encourage breast-feeding and discourage the use of commercially made formulas.
- Mother and baby clubs are a good way to do this.





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**NUTRITION AND  
NOURISHMENT  
for CHILDREN  
UNDER TWO YEARS OLD**



# Feeding growing children

- There is an important set of messages to be communicated to parents and children
- Exercise and good diet are both vital for growing children and were part of traditional village life.
- In the cities children may
  - Miss meals
  - Try to counter the effects of lack of exercise through eating less, or the wrong things
  - Develop a taste for commercial fast food and pre-prepared foods
  - Reject the healthy traditional foods as old fashioned.
- Parents need information and support on child nutrition.



# Nutrition for old people

- Old people tend to neglect their diet, but they need
  - Plenty of protein (from meat, fish, beans) and
  - Less Carbohydrate (from bread, porridge etc).
  - Plenty of fruit and vegetables for roughage, and for vitamins and minerals
  - Less salt and plenty of water.





# Environment and healthy eating

- Good food ingredients are important, but sanitation, and clean water supply are also vital.
- Contamination of wells and other water sources can be because of bad hygienic habits
- Rubbish and human and animal excrement near water supply sources must be avoided
- Good water means less danger of diarrhea and other water borne conditions, with important improvements in child mortality rates.





# A library nutrition campaign

- The library needs to make sure it stocks good information materials on nutrition and health.
  - Encouraging recognition of traditional farming, gardening and food collecting practices could be done through cooperation with local farmers.
  - Cookery books can make a good contribution and the library could encourage cookery clubs and contests.
  - Food education for young children is important and simple cookery lessons, using traditional recipes, could form part of the activities of a children's learning group.
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