



सत्यमेव जयते  
ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय  
भारत सरकार



# BALANCED DIET AND DIET DIVERSITY FOR THE FAMILY

## Facilitator Guide for SHG Meetings



**Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**  
Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India



## Dear Facilitator

This facilitator guide on **“Balanced Diet and Diet Diversity”**, is designed to help all facilitators under State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs) in rolling out the Flipbook and disseminating key messages within the SHG groups and other community cadres. This session is part of a training package on Food, Nutrition, Health and WASH (FNHW) consisting of Flip books, Facilitator guides, Posters, Counselling Cards and Stickers.

The objective of this training is to empower SRLM staff, cadres and community at large with the knowledge to improve health and nutrition by increasing diet diversity. This gained knowledge may consequently help to improve practices on consuming diverse diets and to improve the nutrition and health status of their family & community. We all know that better health and nutrition results in higher productivity leading to reduction in poverty and improvement in quality of life.

It should be kept in mind that this orientation package, although meant for SHG women, should serve as reference material for the entire family. Information provided under each session through flipbooks and this guide should be seen as collective learning for the family, and each member of the family needs to play their part to ensure that the messages are adopted by them in everyday lives.

The responsibility of getting these behaviors imbibed does not lie with women only, the men/husbands/older boys in the family need to ensure making arrangements for whatever is required to follow these practices on FNHW.

## Objectives

**After going through the module, the facilitator will be able to:**

- Understand and explain to the participants on significance of eating diverse and balanced diet to lead a healthy life.
- Comprehend the significance of diet diversity for mother, child, adolescents and to the family members.
- Promote ways to improve diet quality, increase the family diet diversity and nutrient density through backyard poultry and kitchen gardens in the household.



## Initiate the session

The food we eat every day is divided into groups based on the key nutrients that they provide. It is important to understand these groups so that we include different food groups in our diet and ensure that key nutrient requirements for the day are met through the food we eat. We will learn about the 10 food groups that everyday food has been divided into, and its benefits. During this session you will learn about the significance of diet diversity, balanced diet and food groups. Also, you will learn the advantages of adding variety to the plate.

## Step 1:

Initiate the session with a discussion on their daily intake and variety they cook and serve in the family food plate. Ask the group if they know that the food we eat is divided into 10 groups based on the nutrients they provide and each group has its own importance.

- What are the ten food groups?
- Why Is it necessary to have more number of food groups in our daily diet?

### Game:

Divide the participants to sit in 10 groups and name the groups on the 10 food groups. Provide each group a chart and sketch pens and ask them to write the name of their group (A food group name will be given by the facilitator) on the chart.

Ask questions with the participants on what are the different food groups to set the context? Initiate a game learning with the shuffled list of foods from each food groups displayed on the paper/white board and read them one by one (Eg: sweet potato, Palak, banana, ladies' finger, a fish variety name, ragi, soyabean, wheat, millet variety name, paneer, tomato, Moringa leaves, mango, etc.) so that respective food group should immediately write their respective examples in their chart. The group who gives more right examples for their respective food group title in the chart, will win the game and will be appreciated by all the team members.

### Identify your Food Group

- ▶ Palak..... Food Group?
- ▶ Shrimps..... Food Group?
- ▶ Tomato..... Food Group?
- ▶ Sweet potato ..... Food Group?
- ▶ Paneer ..... Food Group?
- ▶ Wheat ..... Food Group?
- ▶ Ragi..... Food Group?
- ▶ Cow's Milk ..... Food Group?
- ▶ Fish-variety ..... Food Group?
- ▶ Ducks Egg..... Food Group?
- ▶ Banana..... Food Group?
- ▶ Maize ..... Food Group?

## The ten food groups are:

1. Grains, white roots and tubers, and plantains
2. Pulses (beans, peas and lentils).
3. Nuts and seeds.
4. Dairy.
5. Meat, poultry and fish.
6. Eggs.
7. Dark green leafy vegetables.
8. Other vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables.
9. Other vegetables.
10. Other fruits.



Facilitator will then explain to the participants about the benefits and nutrients provided by each of the 10 food groups referring the below table.

## Benefits of different food groups

Group No.	Food Group	Benefits of Food Groups
1	Cereals and Roots	Provides energy to perform daily tasks
2	Pulses and Beans	for physical development
3	Dry Fruits and Seeds	For physical development and fighting diseases
4	Milk and Milk products	For strength of teeth and bones
5	Meat and Fish	To provide energy, increase physical development and blood
6	Eggs	For physical growth and sharp mind
7	Green Leafy Vegetables	To increase blood and fight diseases
8	Red-Yellow Fruits & Vegetables	For healthy eyes and fight diseases
9	Other Vegetables	To fight diseases
10	Other Fruits	To fight diseases

- ▶ Each food groups is unique in nutrients. Share the discussion points with the participants as given below:
- ▶ Foods from these food groups together provide the required energy, protein, fat and micronutrients for the day.
- ▶ Eat Colorful foods-Red, Green, Yellow etc.
- ▶ Diversified diets add nutrient density.
- ▶ 5/10 food groups are advised for adult family members daily.
- ▶ 4/7 food groups are advised for children daily.

## Step 2:

Initiate the discussion by asking the group about essential food items that should be part of daily diet and their quantities.

### Balanced diet–Food plate for a day's menu

A diet consisting of a variety of different types of food and providing adequate amounts of the nutrients necessary for good health is considered balanced. It is important to understand the quantities in which various food groups should be had in daily routine and what a regular food plate should be like.

Explain to the group that it is not always very expensive to add variety to our daily diet, one should always try to choose items from locally available and seasonal foods.

### An ideal daily diet is suggested to be as below;

- One third portion of your daily diet should consist of cereals.
- Another one third portion should consist of seasonal and green leafy vegetables.
- The remaining portion of your daily diet should comprise of pulses/meat products.
- Use 4-5 teaspoons of sugar and oil in a day.
- Eat one seasonal fruit daily and consume milk and milk products.
- Those who do not consume meat or eggs; should eat pulses, soyabean, milk and milk products in larger quantities.



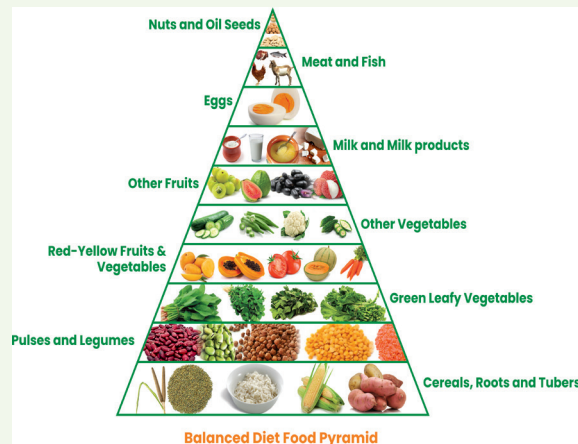


Explain to the group how the food groups and their required quantities can be understood through a food pyramid diagram.

### Balanced Diet Food Pyramid

A food pyramid represents a set of dietary guidelines for humans, typically based on a recommended number of servings from each of several food groups.

- ▶ Broad base of the pyramid depicts foods basic to human nutrition and have highest recommended servings
- ▶ Foods in the narrowest part, at the top, are considered to be less essential and have the fewest number of recommended servings
- ▶ We need to get enough food from each of the different food groups to meet all nutrient needs.
- ▶ A balanced diet should include energy-giving foods like chapati, rice, roti, protective foods like vegetables and fruits and body building foods like milk, yogurt, cheese and fish.
- ▶ Small amounts of oil should be included in each meal.
- ▶ Junk foods regular intake can result in micronutrient deficiencies, therefore avoided.



### Step 3:

Initiate discussion with the participants to understand their knowledge on eating variety of food groups and eating balanced diet. Discuss on the following to make them understand the nutritional & health outcome of eating diverse foods.

### Diet diversity for the entire family

Dietary diversity implies daily consumption of minimum 5 food groups. These food groups together provide the required energy, protein, fat and micronutrients for the day.





- Each member of the family should consume food from 5 or more food groups.
- Use Iodized salt in the diet for iodine.
- Include flesh food for improved nutrient quality of diet, especially iron and protein.
- Consume seasonal vegetables and fruits daily.
- Restrict the use of sugar and fat.



### Points to remember

- ▶ The family, as far as possible should eat together.
- ▶ The women in the family should not be the last ones to eat.
- ▶ Ensure and take care that pregnant women, lactating mothers and young children eat adequately as per their requirements.
- ▶ Diverse diet reflects the nutrient adequacy of the diet.
- ▶ Diversity in the diet is important to meet the requirements for energy, protein, fat and other essential micronutrients especially for those who are at the highest risk of contributing to undernutrition i.e. children 6-24 months and pregnant and nursing/lactating women.

The participants could be introduced about the advantages of eating colorful foods. They will be familiarized on the Tricolor Foods which add nutrient density for a balanced diet.

- ▶ One should eat a variety of food items every day that provide all the nutrients to their bodies.
- ▶ An easy way to remember the Thiranga thaali is through the colour of Indian National Flag-Orange, White, and green.
- ▶ Try to include in every meal and especially during lunch and dinner, the food groups of each of the three colours of Indian National Flag.
  - **Orange** (Orange-colored fruits and vegetables)
  - **White** (Carbohydrate rich foods-cereals like rice and dairy products)
  - **Green** (Green vegetables especially green leafy vegetables)

## Diet for different age groups in the family

Pregnant / lactating	Small Children	School Going Children	Adolescents	Adult Men & Women	Elderly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consume 5 or more food groups</li> <li>• Frequent meals five times a day</li> <li>• Include more of green leafy vegetable</li> <li>• Include more of yellow and orange fruits and vegetables</li> <li>• IFA and Calcium</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusive Breast Feeding till 6 months</li> <li>• Complementary Feeding to initiated after 6 months</li> <li>• Recommended right frequency and consistency to be followed</li> <li>• At least 4 food groups (as recommended in the Infant and Young Child Feeding session)</li> <li>• Child to be consuming approx. half of the mother's diet by 1 year of age</li> <li>• IFA supplementation to start after six months, as recommended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid physical growth – increased requirements</li> <li>• Habit forming age, practice healthy eating habits</li> <li>• Eat high quality protein diet</li> <li>• Consume foods from 5 or more food groups every day</li> <li>• Avoid junk foods to prevent obesity – chips, kulkure, cold drinks, packed juices, noodles, pizza, burgers, etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced diet is essential for optimal growth and development</li> <li>• Add high protein foods – pulses, legumes, dairy, meat and eggs in your diet</li> <li>• Consume plenty of green leafy vegetable and seasonal fruits</li> <li>• Drink at least 6 – 8 glasses of water daily and plenty of other fluids also</li> <li>• Eat healthy snacks such as murmura, chana, chiwda, makhana, etc</li> <li>• Ensure sunlight exposure for adequate vitamin D to help calcium absorption</li> <li>• Exercise regularly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantity of Food depends on lifestyle – sedentary such as household work, moderate such agriculture and farm, and heavy such as construction sites</li> <li>• Consume foods from 5 or more food groups every day</li> <li>• Avoid high sugar, oily and fried foods to prevent heart diseases, diabetes</li> <li>• Do not consume alcohol and tobacco</li> <li>• Consume foods from 5 or more food groups every day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well balanced protein rich diet. Familiar foods rather than new foods.</li> <li>• Variety of fruits and vegetables (red, yellow and green coloured)</li> <li>• Foods to be well cooked in soft, semisolid, easily chewable form</li> <li>• Small, light and frequent meals.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids</li> </ul>

## Step 4: Key considerations for diet planning for the family

### Pregnant and Lactating Women

- Eat at least one or two foods from each 5 food groups out of 10 food groups to increase the dietary diversity every day. (cereals, pulses, dairy products, seasonal vegetables, green leafy vegetables, fruits, fats and oils, etc).
- Include tri colour foods on the plate to prevent micronutrient deficiencies especially deficiencies of Iron and vitamin A.



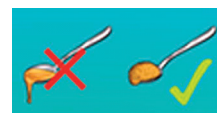
- If a family can afford, include at least 2 glasses of milk or a glass of milk and an egg (if consumed traditionally) in a pregnant woman's diet.
- If the family traditionally consumes chicken, fish, meat, etc., and if they can afford, is a good source of protein and iron content.
- Daily use of iodized salt is highly essential.
- Consume ICDS supplied portion of THR every day which is a food 'supplement', and not a 'substitute' to family food.
- A pregnant woman should consume THR herself and not share the supplied THR with other family members.
- Encourage to consume traditional foods during such as *panjiri* or *laddoos* for gaining adequate weight, enhancing milk production and as a source of energy, protein and other nutrients, such as Iron, calcium etc.
- Pregnant women should be made to consume at least 3 main meals and 1 nutritious snack, in the first trimester; in the second and third trimester, she should have 3 main meals, 2 nutritious snacks and 8-10 glasses of water a day in order to meet her nutritional needs in case of nausea or vomiting.



### Children below 2 years

- A child of this age should be fed 3-4 times a day, about 1 full bowl or katorie (of 250ml) of feed each time.
- Consistency of food should be changed gradually from mashed soft consistency to the type of food consumed by family.
- Apart from well-cooked cereals, vegetables and fruits, a child above one year of age can also be introduced to well-cooked and mashed meat, eggs, chicken and fish can be fed, if these items are culturally acceptable and affordable by a family.
- It is recommended to incorporate at least 4 food groups. The food groups included are-cereal, pulse, green leafy vegetables, other vegetables (yellow/orange/red), milk/milk products and Eggs/flesh foods.
- THR, the weekly ICDS food supplement, received from the AWC should be divided into seven portions and one portion should be fed every day.
- Soaking and germination/sprouting of cereals/pulses improves food quality and makes foods easier to digest, increases vitamin C, B vitamins, iron and calcium. After germination, the grains can be dried in sun and pound to prepare 'pre-mix' with good storage life. Premix can be fed to children.

#### Diet for children below 2 years



- It is good to explain to the mother how the home-made pre-mix is as rich in nutrients as the commercially available 'cerelac', and also less expensive for the family.

The dietary intake of infants, children and adolescents should not only maintain the current body weight but should be adequate enough to support their normal growth and development. A healthy diet is the one which meets the energy requirements and supplies essential macro and micronutrients for supporting the functioning of all vital processes.

### School going children

- Rapid physical growth during this age is associated with manifold increase in nutritional needs. Moreover, food habits formed during these years go a long way in forming the food habits of an adult.
- Diet of a child should consist of high-quality protein, essential for rapidly growing children. Quality of protein can be improved by combining cereal with daal, milk/products, flesh foods/eggs
- Incorrect eating habits should be avoided, such as consumption of fast foods, colas, high sugar drinks, etc.
- Children should be encouraged to consume vegetables and fruits in their daily diet. These are also known as 'protective foods' since they contain many nutrients which help improve the immunity among children.



### Adolescents

- Balanced diet is essential for optimal growth & development. Have 4-5 meals in a day.
- Add high protein foods like pulses, legumes, milk & milk products, meats and egg in your diet.
- Consume plenty of seasonal fruits (guava, amla, mango, papaya), green leafy vegetables like amaranth, fenugreek, mustard leaves, other vegetables like carrot, radish, cauliflower.
- Drink at least six to eight glasses of water daily & plenty of other fluids such as unsweetened fruit juices, lemon water, etc.
- While eating out look for option with whole-grain, fruits & vegetables, lean meat, chicken or fish.
- Eat healthy snacks like bhuna chana, murmura, makana, chivra, raisins.





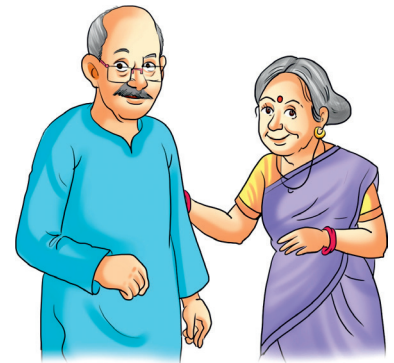
- Family meals should be encouraged.
- Exposure to sunlight to maintain vitamin D status in your body as it helps in calcium absorption.
- Exercise regularly for 30 minutes at least 5 days in a week of moderate intensity (brisk walking, cycling, dancing & gardening).

### Don'ts

- Skip meals, especially breakfast
- Excessive sugar and salt intake through consumption of pastries, cakes, ice creams, chips, namkeens etc.
- Avoid fat foods, ready to eat foods, fried and salty foods
- Smoke cigarettes, hookah; chew tobacco
- Drinking alcohol and cold drinks
- Watch television while having meals

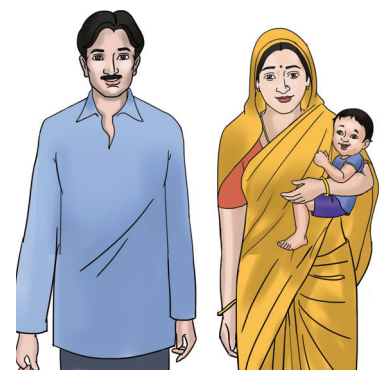
### Adults and Elderly

- Good nutrition is important, no matter what your age. It gives you energy and can help you control your weight. It may also help prevent some diseases, such as osteoporosis, high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.
- But as you age, your body and life change, and so does what you need to stay healthy. For example, you may need fewer calories, but you still need to get enough nutrients. Some older adults need more protein. At this stage, eat foods that give you lots of nutrients without a lot of extra calories, such as Fruits and vegetables (choose different types with bright colors), Whole grains, like oatmeal, whole-wheat bread, and brown rice, Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products that has added vitamin D and calcium, Seafood, lean meats, poultry, and eggs Beans, nuts, and seeds.



### Adult Men and Women are advised to;

- Consume well balanced diet in quantities based on lifestyle-sedentary such as household or desk work, moderate such as farm and heavy like construction workers.
- Consume foods from 5 or more food groups every day.
- Avoid high sugar, oily and fried foods to prevent heart diseases, diabetes and other complication.
- Do not consume or limit intake of alcohol and tobacco.

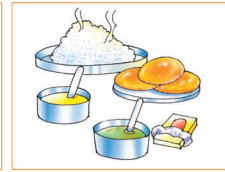


### Elderly are advised to have;

- Well balanced protein rich diet. Familiar foods rather than new foods.
- Variety of fruits and vegetables (red, yellow and green coloured).
- Foods to be well cooked in soft, semisolid, easily chewable form.
- Small, light and frequent meals. Drink plenty of fluids.



High Protein foods



Easy to Digest foods



High fiber foods



Drink plenty of fluids

It should be kept in mind that if there are family members with any kind of disability, their nutrition requirements should be met based on their age and stage of life. The family should make sure that these persons will require motivation and support for eating the right food and stay healthy.

They will require health services depending on the kind of disability which should be taken care of.

### Step 5:

Ask the participants and mothers as how to improve the quality of food they eat, points to remember while choosing food groups, purchasing, menu planning, cooking and serving (Encourage them to answer, Praise the mothers for answering correctly). Initiate discussion with the group on simple and good practices that should be adopted.

### Simple tips to improve diet quality

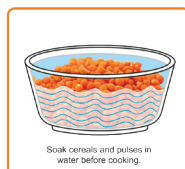
- Wash fruits and vegetables well before peeling and chopping them, this reduces the loss of water soluble vitamins.
- Soaking cereals and pulses in water for some time before cooking, improves the quality of protein.
- Prepare meals on medium heat. Cooking on high heat destroys a lot of nutrients.
- Use iodized salt in your food. Add salt in meals after cooking rather than adding salt while the food is cooked.
- Germination of food increases its Vitamin C content. Try to include sprouted items in breakfast and other meals.



Wash fruits and vegetables well before chopping them.



Cook food in a covered pot or pressure cooker.



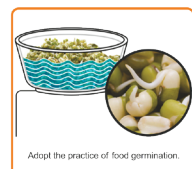
Soak cereals and pulses in water before cooking.



Prepare meals on medium heat.



Use only iodized salt.



Adopt the practice of food germination.



## Supportive measures to improve family diet diversity

Setting up of nutri-garden and backyard poultry are an important investment to increase family diet diversity. Ask the group members if they have set up a kitchen garden in their homes, ask them to share their experience and tell the group that this is a simple process and had great benefits.

- Every family should develop kitchen garden in open area around the house/in pots or containers on roof tops/fields to grow seasonal vegetables and fruits. Green leafy vegetables, yellow/orange/red fruits and vegetables should be grown in the kitchen garden.
- Kitchen garden and backyard produce add to the dietary diversity of the family.
- Every home owning a kitchen garden is a producer and they are primarily encouraged for self-consumption.
- Depending on the space available, families should also engage in backyard poultry, goatery and other related activities. More information on how to set these up can be obtained from and in convergence with the livelihood teams.
- It will save a family from cost of buying vegetables and some meat products from the market.
- Kitchen waste can be used as manure for the kitchen garden. Waste water from kitchen can also be used to irrigate the garden.
- Kitchen gardens can be well planned and planted with a mix of greens leafy vegetables, roots and tubers, other vegetables, fruits trees and common greens like drumstick leaves, curry leaves, mint, coriander, methi, lemon etc.



## Role of Self Help Group

- ▶ The group should ensure that their family member understand the importance of different food groups and that a balanced diet is consumed in their houses.
- ▶ The group should make sure that the husband and others in the family play their role in ensuring adequate diet diversity for the entire family and this is not seen as a woman's role only.
- ▶ It should also be ensured that men in the house understand and ensure special dietary requirements of pregnant / lactating women and young children.
- ▶ Self-help group members should also make sure to let other people in the community know the importance of diet diversity in getting adequate recommended nutrition for the family..

**Note:** The Self Help Group should be ready to support those members who face problems or find it difficult to convey these messages and convince their families.

**Session concludes:** End the session by reiterating some key messages, thank the participants and close.





The Food, Nutrition, Health and WASH (FNHW) Toolkit has been developed by the National Mission Management Unit (NMMU) with support from Technical Assistance agencies-TA- NRLM (PCI) and inputs from ROSHNI-Centre of Women Collectives led Social Action, National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs), National Resource Persons (NRPs), State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs) of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra, JEEViKA Technical Support Program-Project Concern International (JTSP-PCI) and UNICEF state teams from Odisha, Bihar and Chhattisgarh.

The standard materials of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), National Centre for Excellence & Advanced Research on Diets (NCEARD), Alive & Thrive, JTSP-PCI and UNICEF have been referred while finalizing the content.

## **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**

Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India  
7th Floor, NDCC Building-II, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi - 110001  
website: [www.aajeevika.gov.in](http://www.aajeevika.gov.in)



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