

Training Aid for Food Based Dietary Guidelines for Sri Lankans



Nutrition Division
Ministry of Health



Healthy Life Through Proper Nutrition

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“Scaling Up Nutrition People’s Forum”.



**Scaling up Nutrition
People’s Forum**

Civil Society Alliance – Sri Lanka

Model food plate for healthy Sri Lankan adults

- Serve half of the plate with cereals and starchy food (e.g. parboiled or less polished rice and boiled or curried yams/jackfruit/breadfruit as per preference). Some amount of carbohydrate is provided from pulses too.
- Fill approximately 2/3 of other half of the plate with at least 2 vegetables and one green leafy vegetable.
- Fill the rest of the plate (1/3 of other half) with protein sources of food: out of which 2/3 should be from plant sources of protein and 1/3 from animal sources of protein.



**Add colour to your daily meals
balancing the correct amounts.**



Add rainbow colours for variety to your daily meals.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 01

- Consume a balanced diet daily with a variety of food from all food groups that are essential to be taken daily in correct amounts.
- A balanced diet provides all necessary nutrients.
- Recommended food groups that should be consumed daily in recommended amounts are;
 1. Cereals and their products including parboiled or less polished rice and whole grains
 2. Vegetables and green leaves
 3. Pulses
 4. Fish/seafood/dried fish/ poultry/ lean meat/egg (can alternate throughout day/week)
 5. Fruits
 6. Healthy nuts and oily seeds
- Starchy food, Fresh milk and its fermented products, oils and fats can be consumed based on preference throughout the week, in recommended amounts, as they add variety to the daily diet.
- Each type of food consists of a combination of nutrients which helps the body function properly.
- Nutrients in food are carbohydrate, protein, fat, minerals, vitamins and water.
- Natural food of different flavours, texture and colours improve taste, nutritional values and appetite.
- Wisely select nutrient dense, low-calorie, healthy snacks.
- It is advisable to take snacks between main meals keeping at least 2-3 hours.
- Avoid ultraprocessed ready to eat snacks as much as possible. They are high in sugar, salt, fat and artificial food additives. (e.g. colouring agents, preservatives, flavours).

Eat whole grains and their products including less polished or parboiled rice, instead of refined grains and their products



Eat parboiled or less polished rice instead of refined.
Consume whole grains and their products.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 02

- Consume whole grains and their products which are nutritious and healthy.
- Add a variety of whole grains to your meal to get many nutrients.
- Refined grains and their products have lost some nutrients during milling.
- Eat less white bread and refined wheat flour preparations.
- During parboiling, water-soluble nutrients move into the rice kernel.
- Parboiling decreases the availability of starch and increases blood sugar level slowly and steadily.
- All cereals and starchy food should be limited to half of the food plate.
- Depending on the age, gender, activity level and physiological state, the amounts of cereals and starchy food consumed should vary.
- If you take other starchy food with rice, reduce the amount of rice proportionately.
- It is important to distribute the daily recommended cereal/starchy food intake among meals.

**Eat at least 2 vegetables,
one green leafy vegetable and
2 fruits daily.**



Eat at least five varieties of vegetables and fruits everyday.
Eat 6 table spoons from two different vegetables, 3 table spoons from green leafy
vegetables, and two fruits daily.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 03

- Vegetables and fruits help to add variety to your meal.
- They are good sources of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, other phytochemicals and fibre.
- Dietary fibre is essential for a healthy diet.
- Vegetables and fruits are low in calories, fat and contain no cholesterol and trans fat.
- Choose vegetables and fruits from different colours as well as flavours, that help to prevent and control diseases.
- Always have fresh fruits in their natural form than juices.
- Try to consume locally available fruits and vegetables as much as possible.
- You can have fresh vegetables or fruits as a healthy snack.
- Choose at least 400g of fruits and vegetables daily.
- As over-cooking or high temperature destroys some vitamins and antioxidants, salad and steamed vegetables are better options.

**Eat fish or egg or lean meat
with pulses at every meal.**



Eat three table spoons of pulses such as dhal, chickpeas, green grams,
soya etc. in each meal.
A healthy adult can consume one egg daily.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 04

- Pulses, fish, eggs, poultry and lean meat are major sources of protein in our diet.
- Proteins are essential for the growth and repair of muscles and tissues as well as maintenance of bodily functions.
- Eat a variety of pulses throughout the week. pulses combined with cereals in your daily meals.
- Germination and fermentation of pulses and/or mixing with animal sources of food improve the bio-availability of nutrients.
- Make sure to eat pulses/ legumes together with an animal protein for each meal.
- Animal sources have good quality proteins (including all essential amino acids) with high bioavailability.
- Vitamin B₁₂ is naturally found in animal origin food only.
- Small fish such as anchovies (Halmassa), sardinella sp. (Salaya, Hurulla), kumbalawa, bolla are rich not only in proteins, but also in calcium and healthy oils such as omega – 3.
- Children and healthy adults can consume one egg daily, others can have egg white daily.
- Choose poultry and lean meat instead of fatty meats and processed meat products.

**Have fresh milk or
its fermented products.**



Drink fresh milk.
Eat fermented fresh milk products such as curd and yoghurt.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 05

- Fresh milk or its fermented products contribute to increase dietary diversity, but are not necessary to be a part of daily diet. They can be taken on the basis of individual preference within recommended amounts .
- Fresh milk is composed of water (87%), milk fat (3-4%) and non-fat solids (9% protein, carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals).
- Consumption of ½ to 1 cup (100-200ml) of fresh milk or its fermented products is adequate for a person in a day.
- The number of servings may depend on the age, gender, health and physiological status.
- Fermentation improves probiotics (live bacteria) content of milk products and improves gut health.
- Fresh milk and its fermented products (curd and yogurt) are healthy options of snacks.
- Limit consumption of sweetened, coloured and flavoured milk, yoghurt and yoghurt drinks; read their labels for additives.
- Butter and ghee are high in saturated fat; try to use them sparingly.
- During pasteurization and sterilization, liquid milk is heated to eliminate harmful bacteria.
- Powdered milk is made of dehydrated pasteurized milk and may include food additives.

**Eat a handful of nuts or
oily seeds daily.**



Nuts such as peanuts, cashew, as well as oily seeds such as gingelly, pumpkin seeds give you healthy fat.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 06

- Everyone needs some fat in their diet as the body consists of fat (Lipo-protein), provides energy and it helps absorption of fat soluble vitamins (vitamin A, D, E, K).
- Consume moderate amount of fats in your diet.
- Try to replace some saturated fat with unsaturated fats.
- Include oily fish like tuna, herring, sardines and mackerel in your diet.
- Consumption of nuts such as peanuts, cashew, as well as oily seeds such as gingelly, pumpkin seeds provides daily requirement of unsaturated fats.
- In Sri Lanka, coconut is the main source of fat. It has more saturated fats.
- Therefore, it is more suitable for deep frying.
- Scraped and ground coconut is preferred over coconut milk and oil.
An average family of five can use per day;
 - Milk from one medium size coconut or scraped and pounded coconut from half of a medium sized coconut. and two teaspoons of coconut oil per person.
 - The risk of formation of trans fats is minimum when Coconut oil is heated.
- Use a little amount of oil for tempering. Do not re-use oil, once used for deep frying.
- Limit consumption of cakes, biscuits, short-eats, fried snacks (potato/manioc chips, instant noodles, bite mixtures) as they contain high amount of trans fats.

Limit salty food and adding
salt to food.

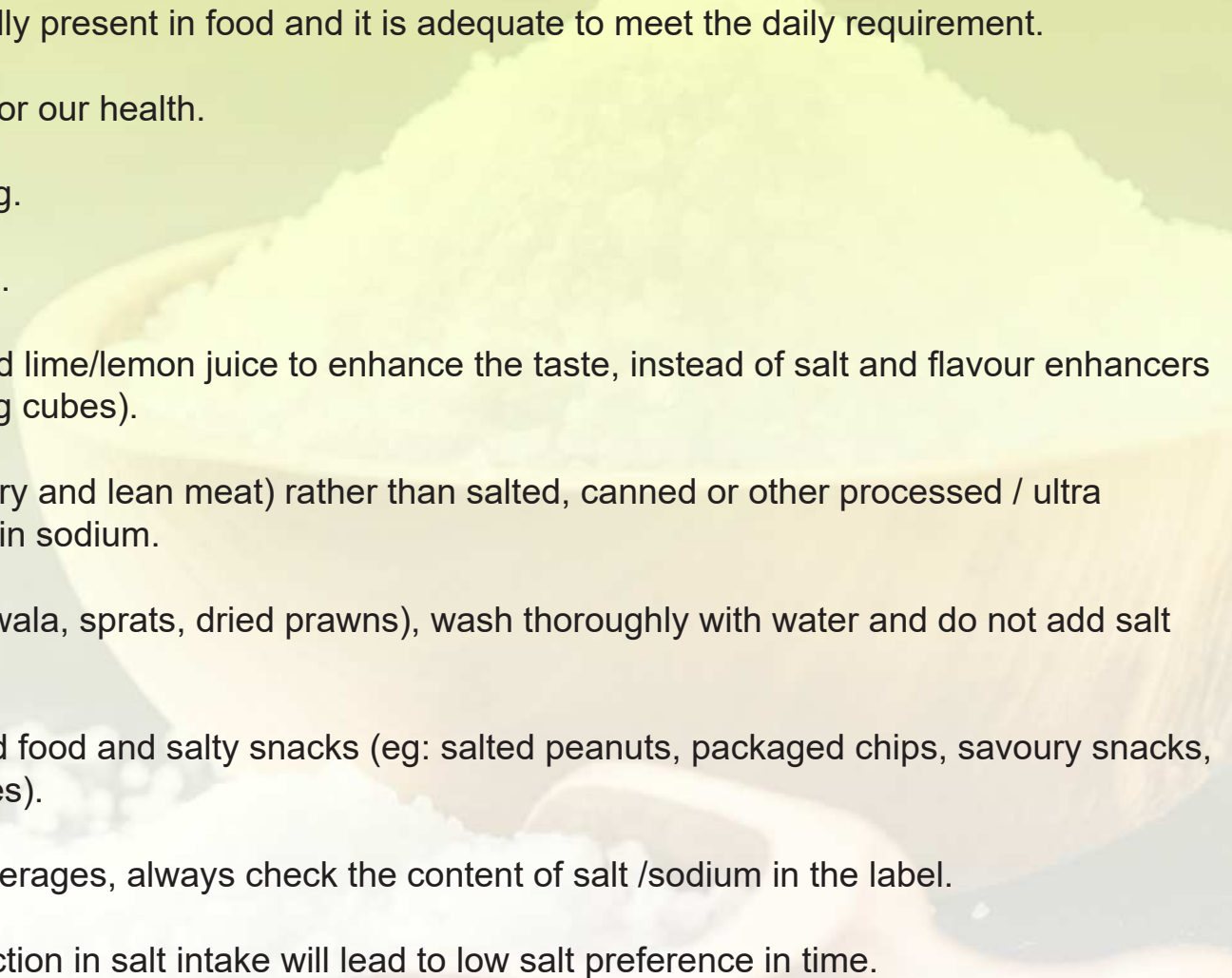


Take less than one tea spoon (5 g) of iodized salt per person per day.
Limit salty food.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 07

- Salt contain sodium which is naturally present in food and it is adequate to meet the daily requirement.
 - Increased amounts of salt are bad for our health.
 - Do not add salt to rice when cooking.
 - Limit adding salt to food at the table.
 - Use herbs, spices, garlic, ginger and lime/lemon juice to enhance the taste, instead of salt and flavour enhancers high in sodium (eg: MSG, seasoning cubes).
 - Select fresh produce (e.g.fish, poultry and lean meat) rather than salted, canned or other processed / ultra processed products which are high in sodium.
 - Before cooking dried fish (eg: Karawala, sprats, dried prawns), wash thoroughly with water and do not add salt during cooking.
 - Limit consumption of ultraprocessed food and salty snacks (eg: salted peanuts, packaged chips, savoury snacks, sausages, meatballs, instant noodles).
 - When buying packaged food or beverages, always check the content of salt /sodium in the label.
 - The taste is acquired; gradual reduction in salt intake will lead to low salt preference in time.
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Limit sugary drinks,
biscuits, cakes, sweets and
sweeteners.



Limit adding sugar to food and beverages.
Limit consumption of sugar to 6 tea spoons daily.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 08

- Enjoy natural taste of foods: Minimize consumption of added sugar.
- Added sugar does not have other nutrients (empty calories).
- Consume sugar sensibly: Limit the high intake of sugar and food with added sugar.
- Added sugar in food produces a rapid increase in blood sugar.
- Some food and beverages contain 'hidden sugars e.g. biscuits, chocolate, cake , confectioneries, fizzy drinks, energy drinks, cola and carbonated drinks, nectar/syrups, malted drinks, caramels, corn syrups and sauces.
- Sugar alternatives/substitutes (e.g. sugar free or low sugar preparations, jaggery, honey) may contribute to non-communicable diseases (e.g. Inflammatory diseases, overweight, obesity).
- Consume healthy snacks such as fruits and vegetables instead of snacks high in added sugar or sugar substitutes.
- Taste is acquired; gradual reduction of sugar intake will lead to low sugar preference in time.
- Avoid adding sugar/ sugar alternatives (e.g. jaggery, treacle) to infant and young childrens' diet to reduce acquired preference of sweet taste.
- Read the labels of packaged food, confectionery, and beverages for sugar content and substitutes.

Water is the healthiest drink: drink 8 to 10 glasses (1.5-2.0 L) throughout the day.



Drink 8-10 glasses of water daily to make your body hydrated and healthy.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 09

- Water plays an integral role in many vital functions in our body.
- Water is preferred over other fluids. It is a calorie-free drink to relieve the thirst and may be accessible without cost.
- Drinking water should be clean and safe. Make sure to boil water at the boiling point at least for 5 minutes: boiling will kill many germs.
- The daily requirement of fluid for an adult can be calculated through following equation.

$$\text{Requirement of fluid (L)} = \frac{\text{Body Weight (kg)}}{30}$$

- The requirement of water is increased in warm climates, during febrile illnesses and diarrheal diseases, in pregnancy and during lactation and when physically active.
- If you are going out, carry a bottle of water with you. Otherwise, you can have a healthy alternative (eg: king coconut water, herbal drinks, tea, or fresh milk or fruit juices with no added sugar).
- If water intake is adequate, one does not feel thirsty, and passes light coloured urine.
- If you are having a tea or coffee, prepare them without milk and sugar.
- Avoid unhealthy drinks such as fizzy drinks, fruit nectars, energy drinks, alcohol beverages as they contain lots of sugar, sugar substitutes, preservatives, artificial colours and flavours.
- Patients with renal diseases have to be cautious when consuming king coconut water and fruit juices due to their high potassium content.

**Be active: engage in moderate physical activity
for at least 150–300 minutes per week.**



Be active to sweat at least for half an hour a day for 5 days a week.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 10

- Healthy life styles including regular physical activity acquired during childhood and adolescence, are more likely to be maintained throughout the life span.
- Most health benefits occur with at least 150 minutes to 300 minutes a week of moderate intensity aerobic exercises, such as brisk walking.
- Add muscle strengthening exercise to improve balance and coordination.
- Regular physical activities help to prevent unhealthy weight gain and assists with weight loss.
- Physical activities reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases and helps to prevent or reduce disabilities.
- Balance the amount of calories you take from the diet against the calories you burn in a day.
- All physical activity counts: Physical activities can be done as part of work, sport, leisure or transport.
- Children between 5 to 17 years should engage at least an average of 60 minutes of physical activities daily.
- Maintain healthy BMI (18.5 – 24.9) and waist circumference (men < 90cm/36” and female < 80cm/32”).
- Everyone benefits from increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour; those who engage in desk jobs, need to stand up and walk 5 minutes per hour.

**Sleep 7-8 hours
continuously everyday.**



Continuous sleep for 7-8 hours per day makes you healthy.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 11

- Sleep improves productivity and overall quality of life and facilitates learning and improves memories.
- Sleep helps to remove toxins that build up while a person is awake.
- Lack of sleep or poor-quality sleep increases the risk of non-communicable diseases.
- Optimize your sleep schedule and daily routines to facilitate quality sleep.
- Daily meditation and relaxation as pre-bedtime routine may induce good sleep.
- Create a pleasant bedroom environment.
- Have a dinner at least 3 hours before going to sleep.
- Digital screens should be switched off at least an hour before sleep.
- Avoid alcohol, smoking and caffeinated drinks in the evening. It may affect the quality of your sleep.

**Eat clean and
safe food.**



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 12

- Food can be contaminated by harmful micro-organisms, chemical or physical agents, which can lead to deterioration of food.
- Slimy film, visible mould, discolouration, rancid or unpleasant odour and taste are some signs of food spoilage.
- It is necessary to take certain precautions to have clean and safe food when purchasing, storing, preparation, cooking and serving.
- Always select food items without signs of mould; mould in cereals, pulses, milk, spices, nuts and oily seeds may contain toxic compound called Aflatoxins.
- Wash hands with soap and water before handling food, during food preparation and eating.
- Use clean, carefully washed dishes and cooking utensils to store, prepare, serve and eat food.
- Cooked food stored at room temperature for more than two hours may be harmful. Do not store cooked food too long even in the refrigerator.
- Store cooked and raw food separately in refrigerator to prevent cross-contamination.
- Refrigerated food should be heated thoroughly at least at 70 °C and should not be reheated more than once.
- Grow fruits and vegetables organically in home garden as much as possible.

**Eat fresh and home cooked food:
limit processed and ultra processed
foods.**



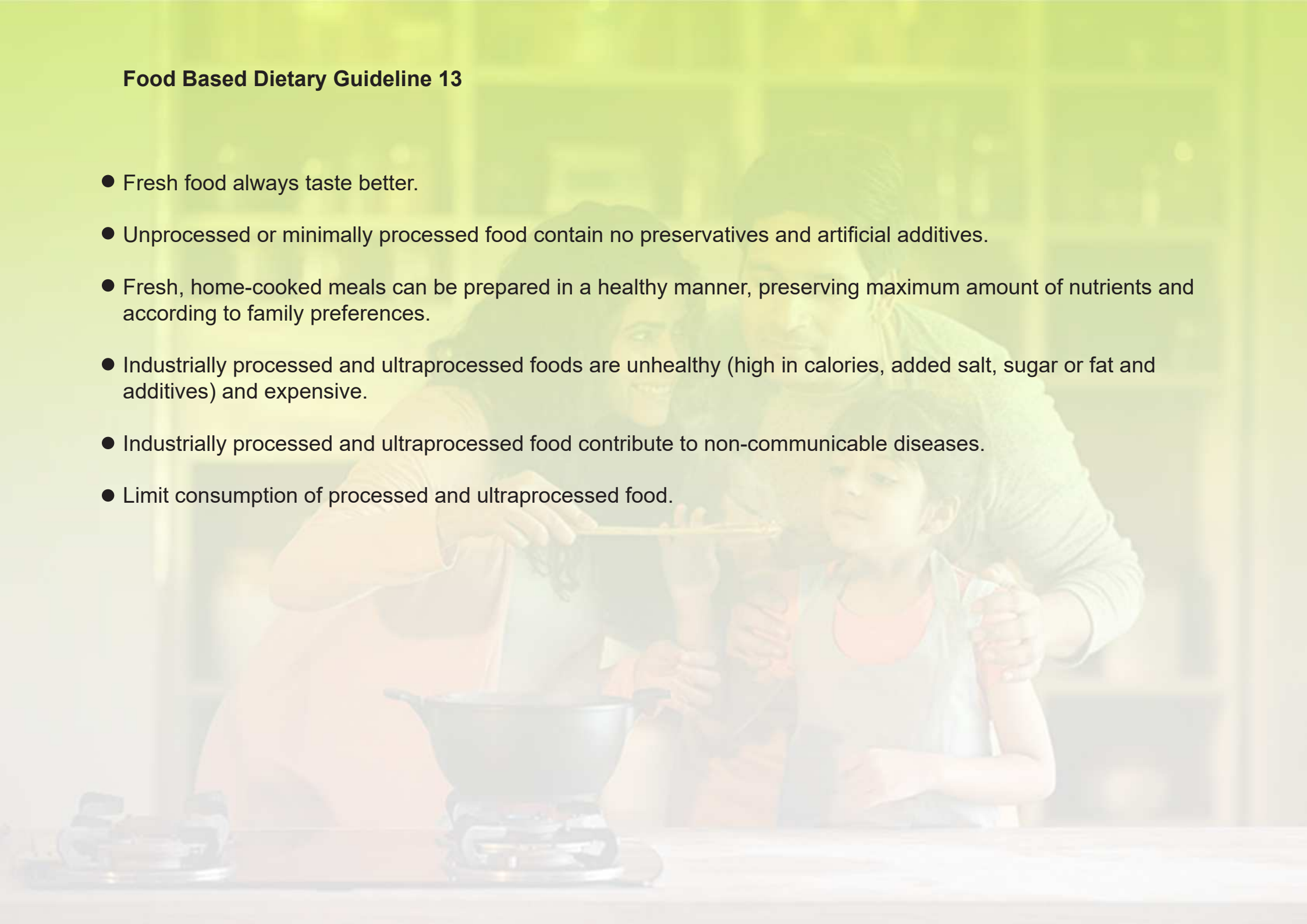
Eat home-cooked foods prepared with fresh produce as much as possible.
Limit bottled, canned or packaged processed or ultra-processed foods.



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 13

- Fresh food always taste better.
- Unprocessed or minimally processed food contain no preservatives and artificial additives.
- Fresh, home-cooked meals can be prepared in a healthy manner, preserving maximum amount of nutrients and according to family preferences.
- Industrially processed and ultraprocessed foods are unhealthy (high in calories, added salt, sugar or fat and additives) and expensive.
- Industrially processed and ultraprocessed food contribute to non-communicable diseases.
- Limit consumption of processed and ultraprocessed food.



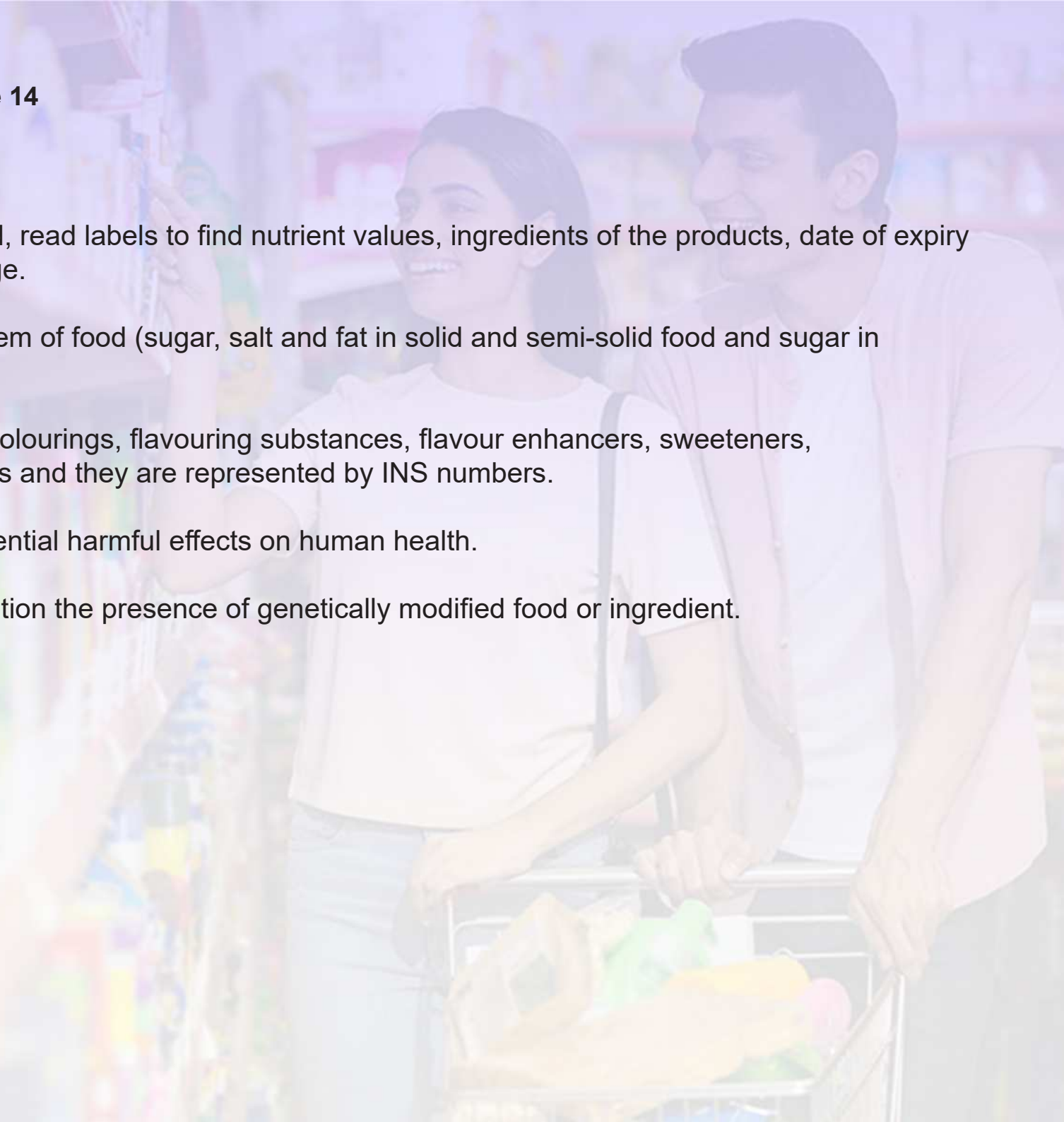
**Always read labels of
packaged food.**



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Food Based Dietary Guideline 14

- When you buy packaged food, read labels to find nutrient values, ingredients of the products, date of expiry and instructions for the storage.
- Follow the colour coding system of food (sugar, salt and fat in solid and semi-solid food and sugar in beverages).
- Food additives may be food colourings, flavouring substances, flavour enhancers, sweeteners, preservatives and antioxidants and they are represented by INS numbers.
- Food additives may have potential harmful effects on human health.
- Label or package should mention the presence of genetically modified food or ingredient.





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