**BALANCED DIET**

¢A balanced diet is a diet that gives your body all the nutrients required by it in order to function correctly. Appropriate knowledge and lifestyle modification play a key role in guiding you for maintaining a balanced diet chart and healthy life ahead.

A balanced diet is not a crash diet. It is a well-planned diet that aims at covering all the important macro-nutrients like protein, carbohydrates, and fat along with micro nutrients which include vitamins and minerals.

in order to lead a healthy life, it is essential to follow a balanced diet. Balanced diet is associated with good health, prevention of diseases and recovery from illnesses. A healthy and balanced diet protects against malnutrition in all its forms and against all non-communicable diseases too.

Eating unhealthy food and lack of physical activity are major risk factors for various diseases. There is no one such particular food item that can provide entire nutrition to our body for optimum functioning, so in order to have a balanced diet we need to have a variety of foods to ensure that we get all the nutrients in optimum quantity. We need different amounts of various nutrients at different stages of life to stay healthy and active.

Nutritional requirements are defined by a person's age, sex, body weight and physiological status. So while adults need nutrients for ensuring optimal body functions, infants and children need nutrients for growth. Apart from this, they need 2-3 times the amount per kg body weight as compared to adults. Pregnancy and lactation also demands more nutrients for proper growth of the foetus.

**Important Elements Of A Healthy Diet:**

- Energy: Energy is required in adequate amounts to perform daily physiological activities and to stay energised. Energy is mostly derived from carbohydrates and its healthy sources include whole grains and millets like whole wheat, maize, bajra, oats, ragi etc. Fresh whole fruits and legumes also provide with a lot of energy.

-Proteins: Proteins are essential for body building and help in repairing the daily wear and tear of the body in addition to keeping the muscles and immune system in top shape. Healthy proteins come from legumes, whole dals, fatty fish, egg, lean meat and chicken. Milk and milk products also add protein to our meals. Adding protein in diet is a good way to ensure that your full for long, which will further help you meet your weight loss goals.

-Fats: Fats are an essential part of our diet and should not be more than 20-30% of the total calorific intake. Saturated fats should be less than 7% of fat calories from both visible and invisible sources. Trans fats should be avoided totally. Fats must include a healthy mix of monounsaturated fats and poly unsaturated fats including omega-3s. Peanut, olive, canola, sunflower, and mustard or til oil are good and must be used on a rotational basis. Nuts and seeds are a good source of healthy fats.

-Vegetables and Fruits: Vegetables and fruits promote health by providing vitamins, minerals and fibre and also induce satiety. Consumption of at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day are a must. They are an excellent source of fibre.

-Milk: Milk and milk products provide essential minerals and quality proteins. About 3-4 servings of milk in a day are a must. Children can take full cream milk while it is recommended for adults to choose low-fat or skimmed milk.

 **Balanced diet chart**

A balanced diet chart is a representation of a healthy diet chart that comprises of all the required nutrients. It includes all the food groups and ensures that we are getting everything that our body needs through our diet.

It is a guideline that gives us the right food choices for optimal health.



A “serving size” is a standard amount of a food, such as a cup or an ounce. Serving sizes can help you when choosing foods and when comparing like items while shopping, but they are not recommendations for how much of a certain food to eat.

The term “portion” means how much of a food you are served or how much you eat. A portion size can vary from meal to meal. For example, at home you may serve yourself two small pancakes in one portion, but at a restaurant, you may get a large stack of pancakes as one portion. A portion size may also be bigger than a serving size. For example, the serving size on the Nutrition Facts label for your favorite cereal may be 1 cup, but you may pour yourself 1½ cups in a bowl.

