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Foods, Nutrition and Health

FOODS AND NUTRITION

been a basic part of our existence. Through the centuries we have acquired a wealth of information about the use of food to ensure growth of children and youth, to maintain good health through life, and to meet special needs of pregnancy and lactation and to use it to recover from illness

- A large part of our food heritage is scientifically beneficial and needs to be retained; some aspects may need to be modified in the view of the changes in our lifestyle.

Definitions

Food is that which nourishes the body. Food may also be defined as anything eaten or drunk, which meets the needs for energy, building, regulation and protection of the body. In short, food is the raw material from which our bodies are made.

- Nutrition has been defined as food at work in the body. Nutrition includes everything that happens to food from the time it is eaten until it is used for various functions in the body

Functions of Food

Physiological functions of food. The first function of the body is to provide energy. The body needs energy to sustain the involuntary processes essential for continuance of life, to carry out professional, household and recreational activities, to convert food ingested into usable nutrients in the body, to grow and to keep warm

Functions of Nutrients

Each nutrient class has its own function, but the various nutrients must act in unison for effective action. The nutrients found in foods are — carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, vitamins and water. Fibre is also an essential component of our diet. The functions of nutrients are given below.

- Carbohydrates
- Fats
- Proteins
- Minerals
- Vitamins
- Water

Food Composition

Most food contain more than one nutrient. The nutrient contents of foods have been determined by analysing these in the laboratory. The composition of over 650 Indian foods has been determined. Of these, the nutritive value of about 160 foods is presented in the Appendix F. The food composition tables give the concentration of nutrients in 100 g of the edible portion (E.P.) of the food. Therefore it is important to know how much of the food purchased is edible. In some foods, such as milk, butter, sugar, the edible portion is 100 per cent. In fruits and vegetables, it varies from 65 per cent in bananas to 98 per cent in tomatoes.