



DEPARTMENT: AGRICULTURE



HIV/AIDS AND NUTRITION



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Eating correctly does make a difference!

- ✧ When your body gets enough of the right food, you will feel better and more positive about yourself and the future.
- ✧ Eating the right food can help your immune system to fight infection. It can also help your body to stay stronger during any medical treatment that you may need.
- ✧ Food provides us with the nutrients that we need to live a healthy life.
- ✧ Many of the physical symptoms of HIV/AIDS can be made better or worse by the foods you eat.

What is good nutrition?

Good nutrition means eating foods each day that will give you the nutrients (vitamins, minerals and proteins) that your body needs to keep it strong and healthy.

What kind of food does the body need?

✧ *Food that builds the body:*

Dry beans, lentils, peas, eggs, meat, fish, chicken, milk, cheese, peanut butter and cooked mopane worms.



✧ *Food that gives energy:*

Bread, samp, porridge, mealie rice, rice, potatoes, oats, sugar and jam, fatty foods (bacon, oil in tinned fish, margarine).

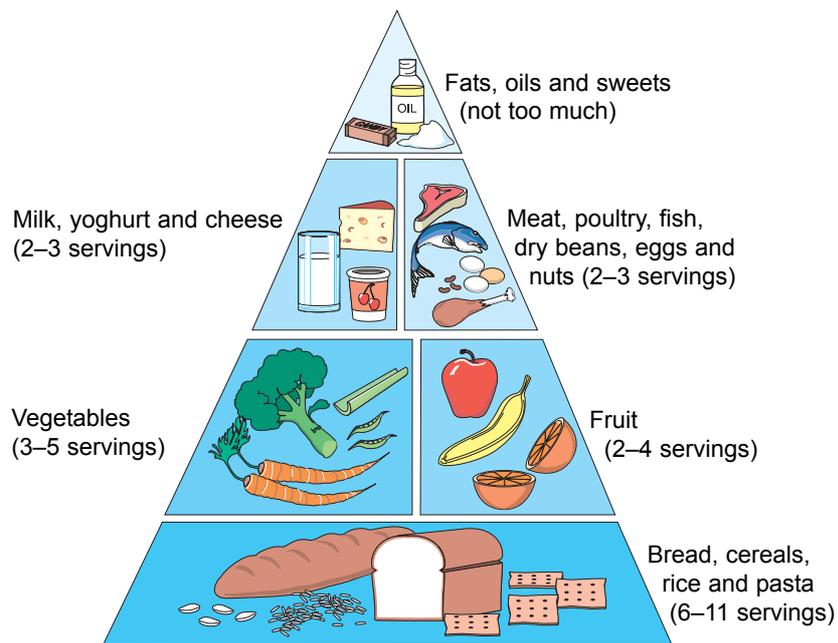
✧ *Food that protects you from diseases:*

Fruit and vegetables.



Food pyramid

The food pyramid gives an outline of what to eat every day. It shows a range of daily servings for each group. The number of servings that is right for you depends on your age, gender, size and how active you are. Ask your health-care worker which group is right for you.



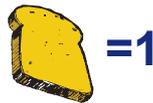
Daily servings are given in brackets

- ✧ Each food group in the pyramid provides some, but not all, of the nutrients you need.
- ✧ Food in one group cannot replace those in another.
- ✧ One food group is not more important than another.
- ✧ For good health you need food from all the groups.

Generally:

- most women and older adults have low energy needs
 - children, teenage girls, active women and most men have average energy needs
 - active adults, teenagers and pregnant and breastfeeding women have high energy needs.
- ◇ People with a low energy need must select the lower number of servings from each food group.
- ◇ People with an average energy need should select the middle number of servings.
- ◇ People with a higher energy need have to select the higher number from the group.

Examples

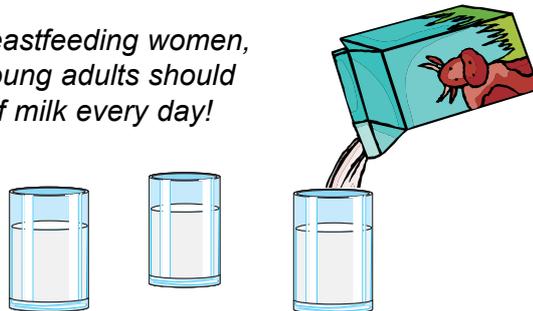


- A slice of bread is 1 serving and a hamburger bun is 2 servings.



- A serving white rice is the same as a serving brown rice, but brown rice has more nutrients than white rice.
- In mixed food you estimate the food groupings of the main ingredients.
- Stew would count in the meat as well as the vegetable group.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women, teenagers and young adults should drink 3 glasses of milk every day!

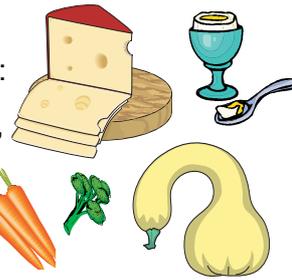


Vitamins

If you follow a healthy diet you will take in all the essential vitamins and minerals. Supplements should not be necessary. However, supplements of vitamin C and vitamin A can help your immune system fight off disease.

The following vitamins are found in natural food:

Vitamin A: as a vitamin in cheese, eggs, butter, margarine, fish oil and liver. As a provitamin in yellow and green vegetables and yellow fruit, such as carrots, pumpkin and oranges



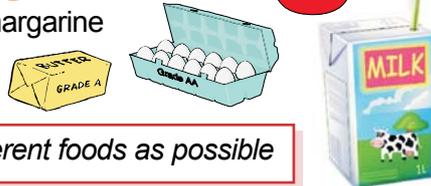
Vitamin B: cereal foods, bread, nuts, peas, beans, bananas, potatoes, tinned fish, eggs, milk products



Vitamin C: oranges, lemons, cauliflower, cabbage, tomatoes, lettuce, guavas, green peppers



Vitamin D: eggs, milk, butter, margarine



Eat as many different foods as possible

Junk food

Junk food includes chips, sweets, cookies and cooldrinks.



- ✧ They are mostly made of sugar and fat and have very little vitamins, minerals and protein.
- ✧ If you eat too much of these foods, you will not be hungry for foods in the basic food groups which contain the nutrients that your body needs.
- ✧ Junk food has a lot of calories and can make you gain weight. Enjoy them along with food from the basic food groups.

Good eating habits

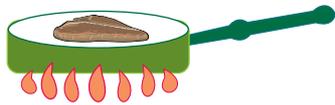
- ✧ Try to eat less meat.
- ✧ Do not eat too much fat.
- ✧ Do not skip meals or eat only when you are hungry.
- ✧ If some foods make you feel ill, tell your health-care worker about it. You could be allergic to certain foods.
- ✧ Listen to your body: do not eat foods that make certain symptoms worse.
- ✧ Cut down on smoking.
- ✧ Avoid drinking alcohol.
- ✧ Rather buy fresh fruit and vegetables than processed foods that contain preservatives. Try eating fruit and vegetables raw. If you have to cook them use a low heat, or steam or bake them. It is better not to boil vegetables because some vitamins are lost in the process.
- ✧ Avoid the use of drugs (poppers, speed, cocaine, etc). They lower the body's ability to fight off disease.



Take special care

People with HIV/AIDS are more likely to become ill from eating certain food and to suffer from nausea, vomiting, fever, diarrhoea, cramps and headaches. You should, therefore, give special care to your eating habits:

- ✧ Buy fresh food every day, instead of weekly or monthly.
- ✧ Keep food in the fridge or airtight containers in a dark place.
- ✧ Store raw and cooked food separately in the fridge.
- ✧ Keep raw meat away from other food.
- ✧ Defrost food in the fridge and not at room temperature.



✧ Use a separate chopping board for raw meat. A hard plastic board is better than a wooden board. Disinfect the board every week using a weak solution of bleach.



✧ Always cook meat, fish and eggs well. Do not eat raw eggs.

✧ Keep leftovers in the fridge.

✧ Eat only pasteurised dairy products and drink pasteurised milk.

✧ Wash fruit and vegetables well before eating.

Dealing with weight loss

People with HIV/AIDS often lose weight although they eat healthy food. Gain weight or keep it steady in the following way:

- ✧ If you often vomit or suffer from diarrhoea, try to eat yoghurt, peanut butter, salad dressing, coconut and grated cheese. Squeeze lemon juice over fatty foods to help digestion.
- ✧ Drink fruit juices, milkshakes and hot chocolate.
- ✧ Chew your food well before swallowing.
- ✧ Eat four to five small meals instead of three big meals a day.
- ✧ Eat snacks between meals such as raisins, potato crisps, peanuts, biscuits or dried fruit.
- ✧ Try to keep your weight constant. Ask your health-care worker what your right weight should be.

Drink lots of cold water!



Boost your immune system

- ✧ Increase the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables that you eat. Try to eat a leafy green vegetable (spinach), a yellow vegetable (pumpkin) and a vegetable or fruit that contains vitamin C (orange, guava, green pepper) every day.
- ✧ Eat unrefined cereal foods such as samp, mealie rice, brown bread, oats and mabela.
- ✧ Drink less coffee. 
- ✧ Eat food as close to its natural state as possible.
- ✧ Eat less refined foods. Grill, steam or boil your food.
- ✧ Avoid spicy foods.
- ✧ Do not eat too many processed, preserved, coloured and artificially flavoured foods.

Consult your doctor or health-care worker before taking vitamin supplements

Exercise

- ✧ Being fit, helps your body fight infection and your brain to handle pain. Walk fast for half an hour every day, walk up and down steps, swim, jog, dance, take part in a sport, etc.
- ✧ If you are ill, try gentle exercise such as walking to the shop and climbing stairs instead of taking the lift.
- ✧ Make sure you get enough sleep. It helps you cope with every day living.



Grow your own vegetables

Growing your own vegetables saves a lot of money. Home-grown vegetables are also often fresher than those that you buy.

The Department of Agriculture has compiled various Info Paks on how to grow your own vegetables. These pamphlets are available from the Resource Centre.

This publication is available on the web: www.nda.agric.za/publications

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