



Balanced Nutritional Diet for Mother and Child

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Adequate nutrition is fundamental to the growth and development of infants and children. Balanced and healthy diet strengthens your child's immune system, helps him or her maintain healthy weight, and aids in his or her brain and bone development.

Infants obtain their nutrition from breast milk, which is a perfect mix of vitamins, protein and fat. It also contains antibodies that help your baby fight viruses and bacteria.

As the infants progress to early childhood, they require a diet rich in cereals, vegetables, fruits, protein, dairy products and lean meat. Every child has unique nutritional needs and it varies depending on their activity levels. Poor Nutrition is the Cause of Various Childhood Diseases.

Nutrition means using food intelligently for growth, nourishment, sustenance and repair of the body. It determines a child's body size, performance, and wellbeing and helps them achieve long disease free life. If the child does not receive proper nutrition, he or she may suffer from malnutrition.

There has been active research in the area of formula intolerance and allergy, allowing practicing physicians to better counsel parents about dietary choices. The introduction of solid food is necessary for any infant in order to provide adequate nutrition because when they grow up milk is insufficient for their nutritional needs. Infants born preterm have increased nutritional requirements.

There is no other time in life when the provision of adequate and balanced nutrition is of greater importance than during infancy and childhood. During this dynamic phase characterized by rapid growth, development and developmental plasticity, a sufficient amount and appropriate composition of nutrients both in health and disease are of key importance for growth, functional outcomes such as cognition and immune response, and the metabolic programming of long-term health and well-being.

Almost two-thirds of the deaths of children around the world are directly or indirectly associated with nutritional deficiencies. Both protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies increase the risk of death from common diseases such as acute gastroenteritis, pneumonia and measles.

Iron deficiency anemia is estimated to affect almost 25% of the world's population (equivalent to 3.5 billion people) resulting in high economic costs by adding to the burden on healthcare services, affecting learning in school and reducing adult productivity.

The four common micronutrient deficiencies include those of iron, iodine, vitamin A, and zinc.

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