

NATIONAL NUTRITION WEEK 2012: “A Food Guide to Healthy Eating”

September 2012

INTRODUCTION

This serves as a background document highlighting the key messages to be used throughout National Nutrition Week 2012. It can be used in conjunction with the Questions and Answers document.

The objective of this document is to outline the key messages to be communicated and statistics to be used; in order to ensure consistency in communication by all involved with National Nutrition Week 2012.

The communication of the messages can be adapted according to the target market. The overall content and meaning should remain consistent with this document and the associated Questions and Answers document.

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF NATIONAL NUTRITION WEEK 2012 KEY MESSAGES

OVERALL MESSAGE

Healthy eating is a key component of a healthy lifestyle. Use the Food Guide and the Guidelines for Healthy Eating to learn more about the best food choices for your eating plan.

ASSOCIATED KEY MESSAGES

- (i) The food guide reminds you to make food choices that build healthy eating plans.**
- (ii) The food groups are illustrated in different sized circles to remind you that more foods should be used from some groups, while others are eaten sparingly.**
- (iii) The amount of food that can be eaten from each of the food groups varies, depending on age, gender and level of activity. The food guide documents provide this information.**

The target group for the National Nutrition Week 2012 ‘A Food Guide to Healthy Eating’ campaign is the general public, reached via interpersonal communication and media. Messages for health workers will be communicated via the Department of Health, and through targeted publications.

The overall and associated key messages must remain consistent as per this document and associated Questions and Answers document, in order to ensure consistency. They may be adapted to meet the needs of the target audience.

- The overall message and associated 3 key messages should be used in the format stated, with the same wording to avoid mixed messages and confusion.
- The statistics given should be the statistics used in this document in order to avoid confusion or too many messages.
- The messages should only be used for generic health promotion and not to promote any specific brands.
- Any of these messages that are linked to NNW in any way should be sent to the Department of Health: Directorate Nutrition for approval and for reporting total work done when NNW is complete (For attention: Maude de Hoop; dehoom@health.gov.za).

FACTS

- Unhealthy diets and physical inactivity are among the leading causes of the major non-communicable diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer, and contribute substantially to the global burden of disease, death and disability (WHO, 2004).
- Economic development, urbanisation and modernisation in South Africa is characterized by changes in dietary patterns and nutrient intakes that will increase the risk of the diet-related non-communicable diseases (Vorster et al, 2011).

According to a risk assessment conducted by the South African Medical Research Council (MRC, 2007):

- There was a significant increase in deaths caused by Chronic Diseases of Lifestyle (CDL);
- Eating patterns changed – the foods that people consume have changed, and hence they have less fibre, more saturated fat, salt and processed foods;
- Poor eating habits are evident in the ever increasing number of overweight / obese adults and children;
- A high proportion of South African adult females (56%) and adult men (29%) are overweight (BMI >25 kg/m²) or obese (BMI >30 kg/m²);
- Seventeen (17%) of children aged 1-9 years are overweight or obese. ;
- Six (6) million South Africans have high blood pressure/hypertension. A Quarter (25%) of the adult population have risk factors for high blood pressure – obesity, excessive alcohol consumption and a high sodium (salt) and low vegetable, legume and milk intake and hence a low potassium intake;
- Almost 8 million South Africans aged 30 years and older carry a risk for a chronic lifestyle disease because of high cholesterol;
- Over 20 000 deaths, accounting for 4.3% of all deaths in 2000 could be attributed to diabetes, which places it as the 7th commonest cause of death in the country;
- There is strong scientific evidence available that shows that following a healthy lifestyle with a healthy eating plan, regular physical activity, management of stress and non-smoking are essential to promote good health and prevent and manage chronic diseases (WHO, 2007).

OVERALL MESSAGE

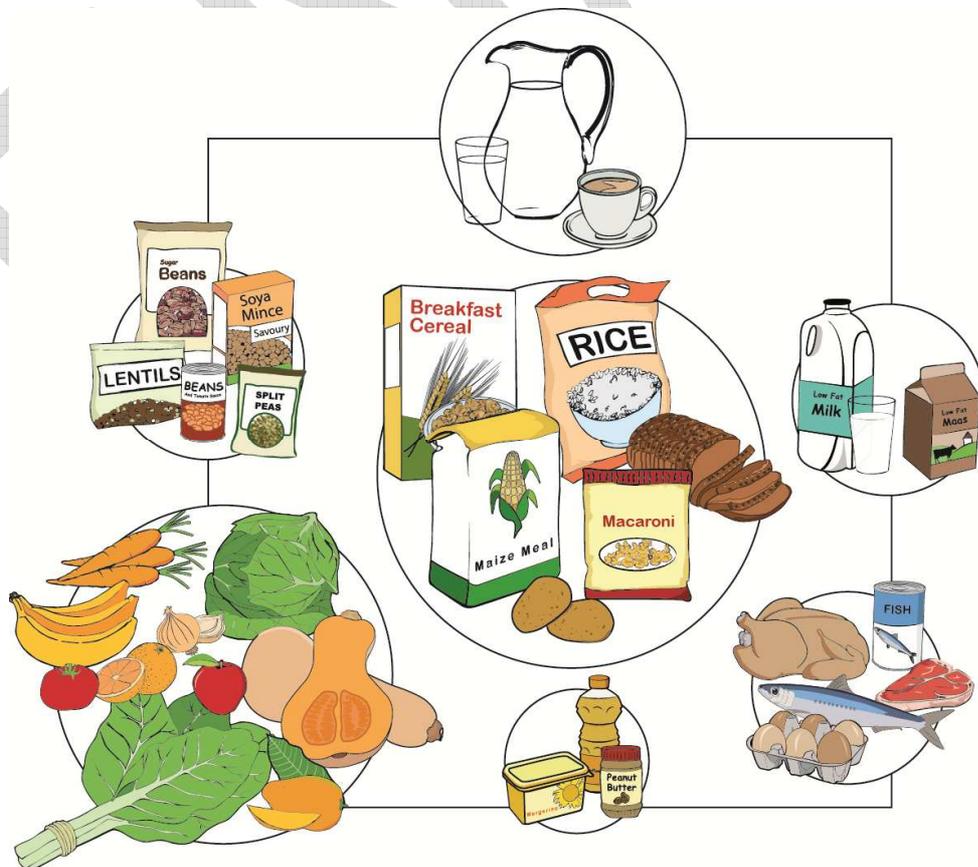
Healthy eating is a key component of a healthy lifestyle. Use the Food Guide and the Guidelines for Healthy Eating to learn more about the best food choices for your healthy eating plan.

South African experts developed the *Guidelines for Healthy Eating* 10 years ago to provide information to South Africans to help them make healthy food choices; recently, the guidelines were reviewed and updated to be in line with new scientific evidence. In addition, a *Food Guide* was developed to be used in conjunction with the Guidelines as a visual reminder to support the messages.

The aim of the *Guidelines for Healthy Eating* and the *Food Guide* are to encourage people to:

- eat a variety of foods,
- from each of the food groups,
- in the correct amounts,
- according to their needs.

The South African *Food Guide* is illustrated below:



Some people use international food guides, such as the pyramid or food plate with different food groupings, food examples and number of serves. This resulted in conflicting nutrition education messages. The *South African Food Guide* has been tested among South African consumers and support the *Guidelines for Healthy Eating*. This is the first time that South Africa has had a Food Guide that is suitable for use nationally, by all who communicate nutrition messages.

NATIONAL NUTRITION WEEK 2012: KEY MESSAGES

KEY MESSAGE 1:

THE FOOD GUIDE REMINDS YOU TO MAKE FOOD CHOICES THAT BUILD HEALTHY EATING PLANS.

- The Food Guide illustrates the primary food groups as circles based on each of the following *Guidelines for Healthy Eating* :
 - Drink lots of clean, safe water.
 - Make starchy foods part of most meals.
 - Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit every day.
 - Eat dry beans, split peas, lentils and soya regularly.
 - Fish, chicken, lean meat or eggs could be eaten daily.
 - Have milk, maas or yoghurt every day.
 - Use fat sparingly; choose vegetable oils rather than hard fats.
- Healthy eating plans include a variety of foods from each of these food groups. Variety also means including foods from two or more food groups at each meal; these are called mixed meals.
- The household budget can be allocated to plan meals with a variety of foods that will be the best choices, within that budget.
- Using the information in the *Food Guide* also helps one not to get too much of some nutrients which do not contribute to health; such as excess energy, saturated fat and salt (sodium). Most choices of foods should be ones that are the most nutritious choices from the food group. Most of these choices will be low in saturated fats, low in added sugar and added sodium; and will provide essential nutrients. The amount of energy a person needs from his/her daily food intake depends on his/her age, gender and activity level.

KEY MESSAGE 2:

THE FOOD GROUPS ARE ILLUSTRATED IN DIFFERENT SIZED CIRCLES TO REMIND YOU THAT MORE FOODS SHOULD BE USED FROM SOME GROUPS, WHILE OTHERS ARE EATEN SPARINGLY

- The proportion of the circles illustrated in the *Food Guide* is intended to highlight the foods that should be eaten in larger amounts, compared to those eaten sparingly. The graphic is not a mathematically correct representation of this proportion, but serves as a guide.
- The following guidelines help to plan good, mixed meals.
 - Identify the meals and snacks that will be eaten during the day and remember to include times to have something to drink.
 - Start with a starchy food, as a starchy food should be part of most of the meals. Starchy foods may also be part of some of the snacks. Other foods should be eaten together with the starchy food.
 - Include plenty of vegetables and fruit during the day. Use one dark green leafy or yellow-fleshed vegetable or fruit each day. When available, use a variety of vegetables and fruit.
 - Plan for other foods to be eaten with the starchy food and vegetables including some or all of the following (represented as smaller circles on the *Food Guide*)
 - dry beans, split-peas, lentils and soya;
 - oil, tub margarine or plant foods with plant oil (avocado, peanut butter)
 - milk, maas or yoghurt
 - fish, chicken, lean meat, or eggs.
- The following can be added sparingly for additional flavor, but can be harmful when too much is used (therefore not shown on the *Food Guide*):
 - sugar or sugar-containing food or drinks
 - salt or other salt-based seasoning/stock cubes/gravy powders used during food preparation.

KEY MESSAGE 3:

THE AMOUNT OF FOOD THAT CAN BE EATEN FROM EACH OF THE FOOD GROUPS VARIES DEPENDING ON AGE, GENDER AND LEVEL OF ACTIVITY. THE FOOD GUIDE DOCUMENTS PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION

- The food guide does not show the amounts of a food to be eaten from each food group. This is explained in supporting text that specifies the amount of food (expressed as number of food units) a person should eat, based on his/her age, gender and level of activity.
- The supporting text also takes into account two types of eating patterns, with differing levels of starchy foods, to take different food preferences into account.

- The supporting text describes the unit sizes of different foods in different ways, for example 1 slice of bread (starchy food), ½ cup of rice (starchy food), 1 apple (vegetables and fruit) or 1 cup of milk (milk group), 1 teaspoon for oil/margarine or 1 teaspoon for sugar;
- A food unit should not be confused with portion size. A single portion of food may have one or more units (food guide units) that are eaten at one time. Members of the same family may have different portion sizes for example, a teenage boy may have 6 slices of bread in his school food box to have at first break, and his portion is 6 units or 6 slices. His mother may take 2 slices to work to eat at lunch time, her portion is 2 slices.

COMMUNICATION SUMMARY:

Healthy eating contributes to the prevention and management of diet-related non-communicable diseases. The *Guidelines for Healthy Eating* and the *Food Guide* are useful tools to communicate the correct information on how to make healthy food choices.

NNW 2012 aims to promote healthy eating through increasing awareness of the *Food Guide* which is a visual tool supporting the *Guidelines for Healthy Eating*.

Overall message:

Healthy eating is a key component of a healthy lifestyle. Use the Food Guide and the Guidelines for Healthy Eating to learn more about the best food choices for your eating plan

Key messages:

- (i) The food guide reminds you to make food choices that build healthy eating plans.
- (ii) The food groups are illustrated in different sized circles to remind you that more foods should be used from some groups, while others are eaten sparingly.
- (iii) The amount of food that can be eaten from each of the food groups varies, depending on age, gender and level of activity. The food guide documents provide this information.

FURTHER READING

Department of Health. 2012. South African Guidelines for Healthy and Food Guide.

Department of Health. 2012. Guidelines for Healthy Eating. Information for Consumers.

South African Medical Research Council. South African Comparative Risk Assessment. South African Medical Journal. 2007: 97 (8). Part 2: 635 – 782.

Vorster HH, Kruger A, Margetts BM. The nutrition transition in Africa: Can it be steered into a more positive direction? Nutrients. 2011;3(4):429-441.

World Health Organization (WHO). Global Strategy on Diet Physical Activity and Health. 2004.
WHO

Website: www.nutritionweek.co.za/ www.doh.gov.za

/ENDS