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Nutrition

Didactic Material nr. 2



Introduction

Nutrition is the process by which our bodies take in and utilize food to maintain health, growth, and energy. It involves the intake of essential nutrients that our body needs to function effectively. Understanding basic nutritional concepts is crucial for adopting a balanced diet that supports overall well-being.

For a clear and reliable explanation of what nutrition entails and why it matters for health, check out this resource:

Harvard Health – Nutrition

“Good nutrition helps keep energy levels up and protects against many age-related illnesses and diseases like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.”

What is Nutrition?

Nutrition is the science of how food affects the body—providing essential nutrients needed for health, growth, and energy. It involves understanding the role of macronutrients (proteins, carbohydrates, and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) in maintaining bodily functions.

Proper nutrition supports key processes such as cellular repair, immune system function, and metabolism. A well-rounded diet of whole, minimally processed foods ensures a balance of:

- Proteins, which build and repair tissues
- Carbohydrates, the body’s primary source of energy
- Fats, essential for cell structure and hormone production
- Micronutrients, needed for bone health (calcium), blood clotting (vitamin K), and immune defense (vitamin C)

If you want a quick visual explanation watch this Tik Tok
Lets Talk About Nourishing The Body.

Why is it important?

Good nutrition is the foundation of a healthy life. By understanding the basics of nutrition, we can make informed food choices that lead to better health, improved mood, and increased energy. A diet rich in a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains is essential for maintaining long-term wellness.

Nutrition plays a critical role in preventing diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, by helping to regulate blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.

Follow nutrition expert Abbey Sharp for more tips:

- TikTok: [@abbeyskitchen](#)
- Instagram: [@abbeyskitchen](#)

What are the benefits?

A balanced diet offers multiple benefits that positively impact both physical and mental health. Below are the main benefits, supported by experts and recognized organizations.

1. **Physical Health:** Proper nutrition provides the energy and nutrients the body needs to function optimally, supporting everything from muscle growth to brain function.
2. **Disease Prevention:** A balanced diet can help prevent chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer by regulating blood sugar, cholesterol, and blood pressure levels.
3. **Mental Well-Being:** Good nutrition positively impacts mood and cognitive function. Nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals contribute to brain health.
4. **Energy and Vitality:** Nutrient-rich foods provide sustained energy throughout the day, reducing fatigue and boosting overall vitality.
5. **Growth and Development:** Essential nutrients are especially important for children and adolescents, supporting growth, bone development, and overall physical and cognitive development.
6. **Immune Support:** A balanced diet strengthens the immune system, helping the body fight infections and recover from illnesses more quickly.

Eating a wide variety of colorful fruits and vegetables is key to getting different nutrients and antioxidants. Each color group supports specific aspects of health, such as heart health, detoxification, or longevity.

Watch this video to learn more about the concept of **“eating the rainbow”**

What can I do?

IN 2021, A GLOBAL SURVEY HIGHLIGHTED GROWING AWARENESS OF NUTRITION'S ROLE IN HEALTH.

More people are focusing on eating more plant-based foods and reducing processed sugar. Initiatives like FoodCare help educate communities on making healthier food choices through workshops, campaigns, and educational materials.

If you want to improve your diet:

- Eat balanced meals with a variety of food groups.
- Choose fresh fruits and vegetables over processed snacks.
- Include whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Limit sugary drinks, processed foods, and excess salt.

Helpful tool:

Jow is an app that helps you plan your meals, create smart shopping lists, and discover healthy recipes tailored to your dietary preferences. Simply select your favorite recipes, and the app generates a shopping list with all the ingredients you need. It's an easy way to save time, reduce food waste, and maintain a balanced diet.

Download the app here:

Jow (Available on App Store and Play Store)



What have I learnt?

- **Importance of Nutrients:**

Nutrition involves taking in essential nutrients needed for growth, energy, and overall health. Practicing good nutrition requires critical thinking to make informed food choices.

- **Physical Health Benefits:**

A balanced diet supports muscle growth, brain function, energy levels, and overall physical wellbeing.

- **Disease Prevention:**

Good nutrition helps prevent chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers by regulating blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.

- **Sustainability and Nature:**

Making healthy food choices also encourages sustainability and respect for the environment, recognizing that humans are part of nature and must preserve natural resources.

All is summerized in the **European approach of Microcredentials**

Micro-credential 1

Understanding Nutrition

- 1.1 value sustainability by reflecting on personal values while critically evaluating how they align with sustainability values.
- 1.2 Supporting fairness to support equity and justice for current and future generations and learn from previous generations for sustainability.
- 1.3 Promoting nature to acknowledge that humans are part of nature; and to respect the needs and rights of other species and of nature itself in order to restore and regenerate healthy and resilient ecosystems.

Micro-credential 2

Adopting Healthy Eating Habits

- 2.1 (Systems thinking), to approach a sustainability problem from all sides; to consider times, space and context in order to understand how elements interact within and between systems.
- 2.2 (Critical thinking) To assess information and arguments, identify assumptions, challenge the status quo, and reflect on how personal, social and cultural backgrounds influence thinking and conclusions.
- 2.3 (Problem framing) To formulate current or potential challenges as a sustainability problem in terms of difficulty, people involved, time and geographical scope, in order to identify suitable approaches to anticipating and preventing problems, and to mitigating and adapting to already existing problems.

Micro-credential 4

Promoting a Balanced Diet

- 3.1 (Futures literacy) to envision alternative sustainable futures by imagining and developing alternative scenarios and identifying the steps needed to achieve a preferred sustainable future.
- 3.2 (Adaptability) to manage transitions and challenges in complex sustainability situations and make decisions related to the future in the face of uncertainty, ambiguity and risk.
- 3.3 (Explorator thinking) to adopt a relational way of thinking by exploring and linking different disciplines, using creativity and experimentation with novel ideas or methods.