

# Changing dietary habit essay

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Nutrition is body's ability to eat food and to extract energy from it for growth repair and health. As it is aptly said – ' We are what we eat'. So it is very important to get enough calories and proper nutrients from what we eat. That is, our body requires a balanced diet which must include all five major nutrients – Carbohydrates, Fats, Proteins, Vitamins and Minerals.

Diet is something closely related to our health. If our body fails to get all the essential nutrients, then it suffers from malnutrition. Malnourished person is more susceptible to diseases. Lack of balanced diet also leads to eating disorders like Anorexia, Bulimia and compulsive eating. If we focus our attention to the affluent western nations, we find many people suffering from illness due to over nutrition. Obesity is the directly linked disease due to over nutrition.

But it indirectly raises blood pressure, blood sugar, leads to heart ailments and predisposes to arthritis and back aches. Over the years there has been an alarming increase in diseases such as Arthritis, Diabetes, Hypertension, Heart disease, Stroke, Depression, Schizophrenia and Cancer. This is a Red signal for us to adopt a healthy dietary habit.

Dietary habits are the outcome of cultural and individual dietary choices. But these may or may not give proper nutrition to the body of an individual..

In developed and industrialized countries people have developed a taste for ' junk' and processed food. Junk food is the creation of modern food science. It includes additives like Aspartame (sweetener), Benzoates (preservative), BHA, BHT (antidetoxidants), MSG (flavoring agents), Nitrates or Nitrites (preservative), Parabens & Sulfites(preservative), which are all hazardous to

human health. Junk food has high fat content which leads to high cholesterol level. Cholesterol and salt set off BP, Stroke and Heart disease in a chain. Excessive salt can affect function of kidneys too. So a healthy diet plan says no to junk food.

On the other hand researchers are designing genetically engineered plants which contain adequate amount of all nutrients to prevent malnutrition in third world countries. These are called genetically modified organisms (GMO), e. g.

Genetically modified strain of rice called ' Golden rice' has high content of Beta-Carotene and Iron to meet Vitamin A deficiency which leads to blindness. Change in Dietary habits is important for healthy living. Eating our daily diet that includes adequate amounts of bread, cereals, grain, rice, vegetables, fruit and limits high fat food can promote health and reduce risk of developing certain chronic diseases e. g.

Asthma is believed to be caused by contaminants and pollutants. But there is a link between disease and diet. Consumption of vegetables and fruits as Grapes, Orange, Tomato and Apple defend from wheeze and Nasal Allergies. Vitamin A, C, E and Phytosterols reduce airway stress. Calcium and Magnesium from milk, cheese, fish and nuts help reduce Asthma risk. Selenium protects from respiratory diseases.

Omega- 3 and Omega- 6- fatty acids reduce inflammation and irritation in air passage. According to the estimates given by World Health organization (WHO), 80% of cardiovascular disease, 90% of type II Diabetes and 30% of all cancers could be prevented by a healthy diet, adequate amount of

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physical exercise and by stopping smoking. Based on these estimates it is quite important to change ones diet plan from unhealthy eating to a more appropriate balanced diet. One should try to follow the dietary recommendations produced by public health agencies.

These include- dietary allowance (known as RDIs or RDAs), dietary goals and dietary guidelines. Moreover the food guide pyramid given by USDA is of great help in following up the balanced diet plan. Food Pyramid Case study A study investigated the behavior of breast cancer patients and their attitudes to dietary changes and the need of dietary advice during their disease.

. A questionnaire was given to a total of 123 subjects. Results: The majority, 65%, were attending the clinic for treatment, 35% for follow-up. Ninety-seven patients (86%) consumed a normal Finnish diet, six (5.

3%) were vegetarians and 10 (8. 1%) vegetarians consuming fish and chicken occasionally. Eleven patients (8. 9%) considered diet a factor contributing to their breast cancer and 38 (31. 9%) had changed their dietary habits after the diagnosis of breast cancer.

The main reason for change in diet was the desire to be cured of cancer (52. 9% of those patients who had changed their dietary habits), in 11. 8% to alleviate the symptoms of nausea and 11. 8% were advised by health care professionals. The main changes reported included a reduction in the consumption of animal fat, sugar and red meat and increased consumption of fruit, berries and vegetables. Forty-nine patients (39.

8%) used vitamin and mineral supplements and 27 (21.9%) consumed dietary supplements including natural products and probiotics. (European journal of clinical nutrition (Eur.

j. clin. nutr.) ISSN 0954-3007 ). In the above case it was the ‘fear factor’ that led people to change their dietary habit and adopt a natural healthy diet without much of fuss. But generally people continue consuming harmful junk foods even when knowing their detrimental health effects. One reason is that they don’t believe the information, because they probably haven’t seen enough evidence.

The most likely reason is that they feel that they cannot break the pattern of behavior in their life e. g. It is difficult to give up soft drinks for some person who has been consuming them for years. Although it is known that it might be a catalyst in causing osteoporosis and impair calcification of bones in children. So far so good, but deciding what is good and what is bad is not easy as it seems.

Knowing different types of foods which are good for health is not enough. The idea is not just to gain knowledge but to apply it in the right manner. Because there’s nothing such as a perfect diet. A so called ‘balanced diet’ may differ from person to person depending upon culture, climate, age, body constitution, medical history etc. Based on research it can be concluded that changing dietary habit along with physical activity can in a way give new life to an individual. Not only it could lower down the risk of chronic diseases but also opens a gateway for healthy living. Implementing a balanced diet plan as recommended by USDA and including GMOs can lead

to an escape from the ill effects of over and under nutrition. Lastly it can be said ' A balanced diet leads to healthy living' therefore people need to be more aware of their diet plan and should make an effort to change their eating patterns.

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