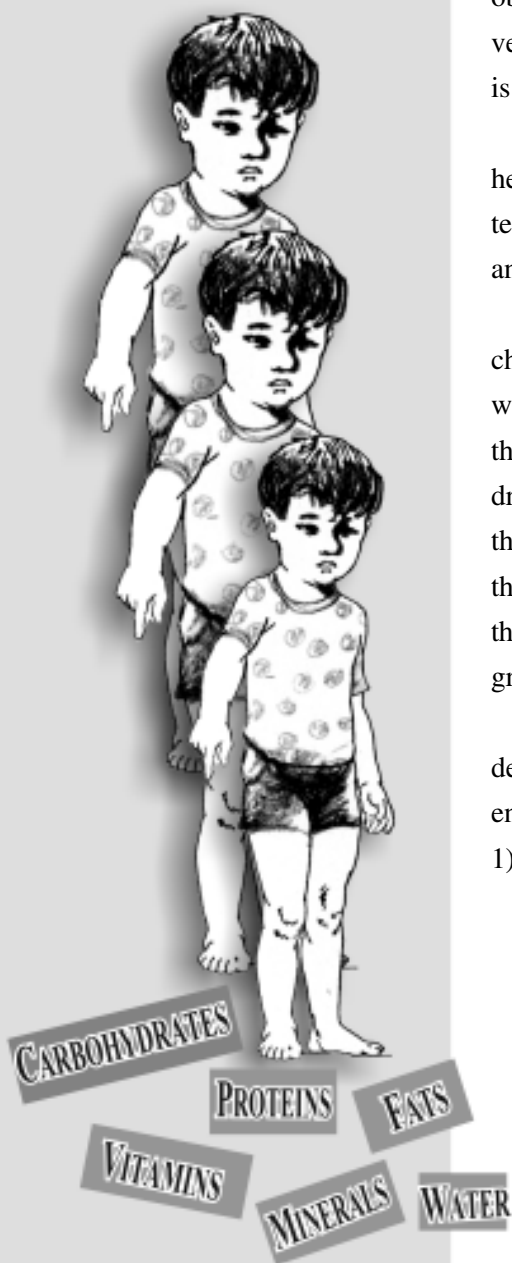


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# BALANCED DIET IS ESSENTIAL FOR GOOD HEALTH

**Dr. Vipul Bhatt**  
Patanjali Yogpeeth, Hardwar.

**O**ur body generates energy through out the day irrespective of the work we do. The heart beats continuously and in this process the waste gets accumulated. All these processes require energy. This energy is obtained from the food we eat. The food with the help of oxygen converts into carbohydrates and water. The energy extracted from the food is used for all the functions of the body.

The food plays an important role in the life of a human being whether he is an adult or a child. There is a continuous degeneration, wear and tear of the cells in the body. In a certain period the old cells degenerate and new cells are formed.

In short we can say that the development is of two types – the change in the shape of the body and degeneration of the cells. In a child we observe the first type of development whereas in adults we observe the second type of development. This is one of the reasons why children need more food for developing. They need healthy food to enrich their growth. We also observe that children consume more food than the adults. A four-year-old kid who weighs ten to eleven kilos eats more than an adult. A child needs essential nutrients, which will help him in his growth. A qualitative and quantitative diet has to be maintained.

The nutrients available in the food react with the enzymes in the development of the body. What does food mean basically? The nutrients in the food can be divided into six groups.

- 1) Carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, enzymes and water. Starch is found in carbohydrates and glucose is available in sugar. Thousands of glucose atoms make one atom of starch. The starch and sugar are digested in the intestines and absorbed or metabolized in the body, but little quantity of carbohydrates is left without absorption. Such type of carbohydrates is found in the cells of the plants. The undigested food is known as fiber, which contains cellulose, hemicelluloses and pectin. There is another mineral called lignin, which is not a carbohydrate but is available in the undigested food

material.

One atom of protein contains thousands of amino acids. There are 20 types of amino acids. As we make several thousands of words and sentences with alphabets similarly out of 20 amino acids there are nine amino acids, which our body cannot produce. They are known as essential amino acids. These amino acids are essential for the development of the body. The quantity and ratio has to be maintained. Even though the quantity of amino acids may be more but they might not be able to contribute for the development of body. The structure of protein is dependent on these amino acids. The healthy protein is one, which contains all the essential amino acids. All the proteins, which are useful for the development of human body, are the ones, which almost match with animal proteins. But they are different than that of plants. This is the reason the proteins of animals are richer than humans. To acquire plant protein one need not consume meat. Vegetarians can obtain this protein through milk and curd. The healthy protein can be obtained from cereals also. However in food grains and cereals amino acids are available but not up to the requirement of human body. That is the reason why one should consume balanced and nutritional diet.

From the ancient times in northern India people consume cereals and grains, south Indians consume Sambar rice, Chinese prefer soybean and rice and northern Americans consume maize and cereals.

Fats are available in oil, butter and ghee. Fats increase the taste of the food and provide rich satisfaction. Due to consumption of high quantity of clarified butter a person feels that the stomach is always full. Due to fat content in the stomach the food reaches the intestines slowly.

The food we consume is not rich in vitamins. We

require low quantity of vitamins. Vitamins do not give out energy but are useful like other minerals – carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. There are vitamins namely – A B C D K. They existed much before we knew their chemical formula. We know the atomic structure and their new names today but we know them by their old names.

Unlike vitamins minerals do not give out energy but they are very important. They play a vital role in the development of the body. For example iron is essential in the formation of red blood cells and calcium is useful in strengthening the teeth. Iodine is useful for the function of thyroid glands. Lack of iodine results in improper functioning of the thyroid glands. In few places where iodine is less people suffer from glandular problem and people use iodized salt. Fluoride is also useful in the development of bones and teeth. Fluoride content should be balanced, fluoride is found in plenty in our country but in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Harayana the fluoride content is more. That is why toothpaste-containing fluoride is not required in our country. Places where fluoride content is more, food rich in calcium such as green vegetables, lemon, orange, myrobalan, should be consumed in balance.

Our body contains 2/3 parts of water. Water is one of the most essential minerals for the body. If water level in the body is reduced the urine content in the body also reduces and changes it into yellow colour. If the water content is more then the urine content is also more and is light yellow in colour. Consumption of water is good for health. Possibility of stone formation increases if the urine is thickened. The virus also increases in the urine and there is possibility of infection. In short we can say that water is also an essential mineral. And should be consumed in more quantity. It depends upon the amount of perspiration, season and exercises.