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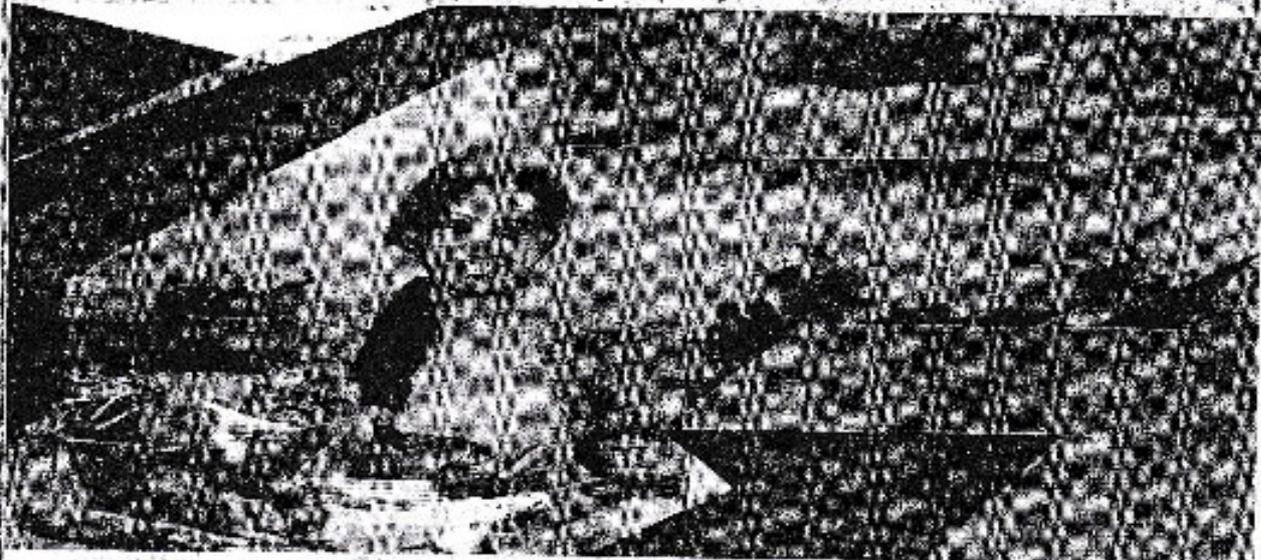
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## Nutrition and women's Health

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A balanced diet is a cornerstone of health for women. But women also have special nutrients needs that change with each stage of a women's life. A well balanced diet comprised of foods adequately meets woman's needs for vitamins, minerals and energy. For good health, women need to pay special attention to calcium, Iron and foliate (Folic acid) intake.

During Adolescence and early adulthood, women need to consume foods rich in calcium to build peak (maximum) bone mass. This will reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis, a progressive condition where there is a loss of bone that leaves those affected more susceptible to fractures. Women need an adequate iron intake because they lose iron through menstruation. Women also need an adequate intake of calories to support energy and nutritional needs in order for the body to function properly. Older women generally require fewer calories to support and sustain energy needs. Consuming fewer than 1500 calories per day, even in attempts to lose weight can put women at nutritional risk and can result in malnutrition and poor health.

Women in their twenties need to take special care of their overall health. This is especially true for women because they have unique nutritional needs, whether they are in their teens, pregnant or going through menopause. Young women in their thirties, who are usually working for long hours sometimes erratic work shifts, often have to meet tight deadlines and face considerable stress and to top it off, factors like eating out frequently, consuming junk food or hardly eating anything and lack of exercise add to poor health. Preparing to get married cause additional stress for working women. This takes a toll on their physical as well as mental health.

### Health status of women:

Physical health deals with ability to function and it can be gained and maintained by regular exercise, as it helps to give more energy, keep muscles fit & strong. Balance diet which creates a balance between what we eat and the way our body uses the food for energy and growth, another factor which is essential for physical health is sufficient sleep as daily 6-8 hour sleep is must for healthy mind. Regularity in sleep time is also one of the factor otherwise biological clocks of body get disturbed. Mental health deals with how a person think, feel and cope with their daily life. This can be managed by learning as it increases self-confidence, awareness, knowledge, self-perception and coping skill. Social health deals with the way a person react with people within their environment. Strong and supportive relations with family and friends increase happiness, self-esteem and reduce stress.

### Anemia:

Iron-deficiency anemia is a very common nutritional disorder among females following the beginning of the menstrual cycle. Iron deficiency is also common among females with poor diets or very low body weight. The recommended intake of iron for females is 15 to 18 milligrams (mg) per day. Good sources of iron include red meat, dark green leafy vegetables, legumes, and fortified breads and cereals.

### Osteoporosis:

Women are at a higher risk of developing osteoporosis as they age than men are. Osteoporosis is an irreversible disease in which the bones become porous and break easily. There are many factor that contribute to this disease, including genetics, diet, hormone age, and lifestyle.





The disease usually has no symptoms until a fracture occurs. Diets low in calcium, vitamin D, or magnesium- or high intakes of caffeine alcohol, sodium, phosphorous, or protein- may increase the chance of developing osteoporosis. Good nutrition and weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, hiking, climbing stairs, helps to build strong bones.

#### **Hypertension:**

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is related to heart disease. After menopause, women with hypertension outnumber men with the condition. Weight control, an active lifestyle, a diet low in salt and fat and with plenty of fruits and vegetables may help to prevent hypertension.

#### **Why is proper nutrition important?**

Are nutrition and healthy related is healthy eating important of course!

Like a finely turned racing car, your body needs the right fuel and regular maintained exercise, lifestyle and mental attitude to achieve its true healthy potential. Nothing is more important than health eating.

Put in the wrong fuel or let it go without regular use and there's no way it can deliver its full power and performance without healthy eating your body engine will cough.

Health and nutrition education to adolescent girls and women help them in decision making. Increasing the amount of time between births is also thought to be helpful because it helps women's body to rebuild their stores of fat, and micro-nutrients, leading to improved maternal health as well as better pregnancy outcomes. Micro-finance programmes which provide women economic stability must be encouraged. Women can receive village banking services, including access to loans as well as education about breast feeding, child nutrition, immunization and family planning practices.

Good nutrition is the cornerstone of good health for a women, but the many phases of a women's life require nutritional adjustments. Learning and following dietary recommendations, and making the appropriate nutritional adjustments, can improve a woman's quality of life and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

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