Relationship between Food, Nutrition & Health
Introduction

- Food has been a basic part of our existence. By knowing the food composition, the nutritional content of food is known.

- Intake of food ensures growth in children and youth, maintains good health throughout life, meets special needs of pregnancy and lactation and for recovery from illness.
• A large part of our food heritage is scientifically beneficial and needs to be retained, some aspects may need to be modified in view of changes in our lifestyles.

• Most of the articles are published in newspapers and magazines may be correct but most of it may not be.

• Therefore this course will give a proper information on food and the knowledge gained can be spread to people around, so that the false ideas about foods which interfere with food selection are erased and health is not affected.
Definitions

• Food – is one that nourishes the body.

• Food may also be defined as any substance eaten or drunk which meets the needs for energy, body building, regulation and protection of the body.

• Food is the material from which our bodies are made.

• Eating right kind of food in right amounts ensures good nutrition and health.
Nutrition - is food at work in the body. It includes everything that happens from eating food to its usage in various functions of body.

Nutrients are components of foods needed for body in adequate amounts for proper growth, reproduction and leading normal life.

The science of nutrition deals with what nutrients we need, in what quantity, how to get them and how the body utilizes them.
• Adequate, optimum and good nutrition – indicates the right amount and proportion of nutrients for proper utilization for achieving highest level of physical and mental health.

• Nutritional status – state of the body as a result of foods consumed and their utilization by the body. Nutritional status can be good, fair and poor.
• Good nutritional status – characterized by an alert, good natured personality, a well developed body with normal weight for height, well developed and firm muscles, healthy skin, reddish pink colored eyelids and membranes of mouth, good layer of subcutaneous fat, clear eyes, smooth and glossy hair, good appetite and excellent general health which is recognized by stamina to work, regular meal time, sound sleep, normal elimination and resistance to disease.
• Health – as defined by WHO is the ‘state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not mere absence of disease or infirmity’.

• Malnutrition – undesirable kind of nutrition leading to ill health. It results from lack, excess or imbalance of nutrients in the diet. It includes both under and over nutrition. Under nutrition is a state of insufficient supply of essential nutrients.
- Malnutrition can be primarily due to insufficient supply of one or more essential nutrients or it can be secondary, which means it results from an error in metabolism, interaction between nutrients or nutrients and drugs used for treatment.

- Over nutrition refers to an excessive intake of one or more nutrients which creates a stress on bodily functions.
• Diet – refers to what ever is eaten or drunk each day. It includes normal diet that is consumed either individually or in groups. Diets may be modified for making it suitable for sick individuals as a part of treatment – therapeutic diets
• Nutritional care – using knowledge of nutrition for meal planning and preparation to make it in an attractive and acceptable form. In this the existing meals can be modified to improve in terms of nutrition, and acceptability. Diet can be planned for individuals or a group to suit their requirements like health status, nutritional status, place of living, climate etc.,.
Functions of food

Physiological Function

Social Function

Psychological Function
Physiological functions of food

• First function of food is to provide energy. Body needs energy to sustain involuntary processes essential for continuing life. It is also required for various activities like professional, household and recreational activities, convert foods into utilizable nutrients required for growth and warmth.

• Another important function is body building. An infant at birth weighs 2.5-3.0 kgs and grows to 50-60 kgs during adulthood, which is possible only if right food in right amount is given from birth to adulthood. Food eaten also help to maintain the structure of the body and helps in repair of worn out tissues
• Food regulates the activities of the body including – heart beat, maintaining body temperature, muscle contraction, water balance, blood clotting and removal of waste products from the body.

• Food helps in improving the immune system and improves resistance power of the body.
Social functions of food

• Food has always been the central part of our existence, social cultural and religious life

• Special foods are distributed during religious functions in homes, temples, churches etc.

• Feasts are given in different stages of life like birth, cradle ceremony, birthdays, marriages etc. many feasts call for feeding specific segment of people.
• Certain menus are associated with specific foods in each region.

• Food has been used as expression of love friendship and social acceptance

• Food is also used to express happiness like success in exams, job, marriages, birth of a baby etc.

• Food for get togethers, meetings or functions should be planned in a proper manner to bring people together.
Psychological functions of food

• In addition to physical and social needs, food must satisfy certain emotional needs.

• It includes a sense of security, love and attention.

• Familiar foods usually make us feel secure.
• Sharing of food is a token of friendship and acceptance.

• In a friendly gathering we try unfamiliar foods and thus enlarge our food experiences.

• Anticipating needs and fulfilling these are expressions of love and attention.

• These sentiments are the basis of the normal attachment to mother’s cooking or home food.
• If the foods included are unfamiliar or not tasty, then even nutritionally balanced foods may not be satisfactory.

• With time and repeated experience unfamiliar and strange foods become familiar and one develops taste for those foods.

• Therefore these aspects are to be kept in mind while planning meals which are nutritionally adequate and also enjoyable.