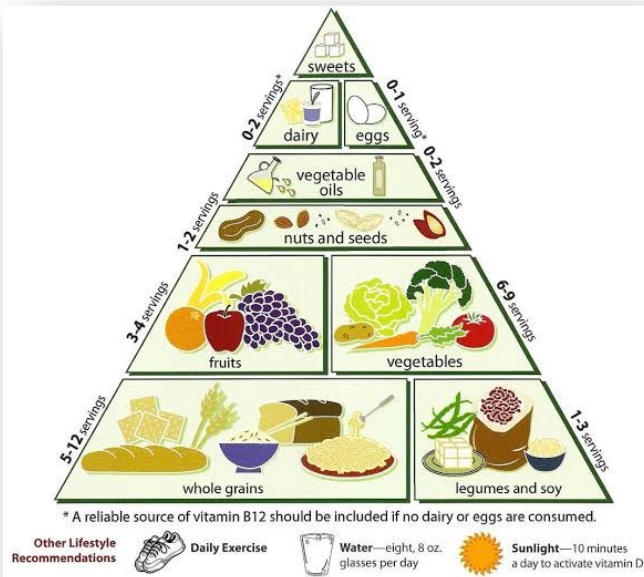


WAIST-ING or WASTING

The recently published National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), of the health and nutrition of India's population described a 'silent pandemic', a split between the two extremes of the nutrition spectrum. A third of the children below 5 years were short for their age and underweight; however, at the same time the number of children that were overweight increased by 1.5 times in 5 years. One in four adults are overweight and half the population have high risk for obesity, while about a fifth of the adults are underweight. Anaemia continued to increase over the past 10 years among children and adults; and one in four adults had increased blood pressure.¹ These conditions are linked to a dietary imbalance, commonly known as 'Malnutrition'. Although most often associated with undernutrition, this 'Double Burden of Malnutrition', is equally associated with overnutrition, affecting all sectors of society and races.



Food has always captivated the human mind from the time of the first sin (Genesis 3), as a bargain price for a birth right (Genesis 25:29-34), as a tool for temptation (Luke 4:3) and as the only physical need mentioned in the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:11). The Bible is filled with stories, counsels, references to food, diet, and nutrition - the excess or the lack of it. Ellen White counselled and advice on healthy diet and lifestyle in her book, Counsels on Diet and Foods, amongst many other letters and publications. The NEWSTART lifestyle program advocated by the Adventist church focuses on two important aspects of diet - Nutrition and Temperance. Science is continually redefining the constituents of a healthy diet with the evolving understanding of different foods, essential nutrients, and other components of

food and their impact on our health and their role in diseases.² The core of a balanced diet remains the same, demanding the greater consumption of health-promoting foods and limited intake or restricting unhealthier options.³

A healthy, balanced diet is one with the harmonious amalgamation of macronutrients (for energy), micronutrients (for normal growth, development, metabolism, and physiologic functioning) and hydration, all 2000 odd kilocalories (for an average person) interspersed throughout the day's meals.⁴ While governments and health organizations pursue in their efforts to curtail this 'silent pandemic', it is our duty to choose a healthy, balanced diet combined with Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Air, Rest, showing Temperance in our choices and above all our Trust in God.

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