



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# Improving dietary diversity for women and children

Participants' handbook for  
improved nutrition practices



August 2022



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improved nutrition practices

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
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## Introduction

Good nutrition in the first 1 000 days, which is referred to the period from conception through the age of two years, is very important for optimal growth leading to a healthy and productive adult. Eating a variety of foods in appropriate quantities every day is a key to healthy diet for everyone.

This handbook is developed with the aim of improving dietary diversity of women (especially during pregnancy and breastfeeding) and children up to the age two years. It contains practical guidance covering the aspects of production, collection, marketing, storage, processing, preparation, and consumption of diverse foods.

As being responsible for their own, their babies' health and nutrition, pregnant, and breastfeeding women are the main target of this handbook. The other members of the family can also read this handbook and apply these good practices for improving the dietary diversity of women and children.

We, therefore, invite all pregnant and breastfeeding women to read the information contained in this handbook and encourage them to follow these practices every day. We also encourage the family members to read the handbook and apply the suggested actions for improving the dietary diversity of the family especially that of women and children.

Thank you!



Topic 1:

# **Monitoring nutritional status of children ?**

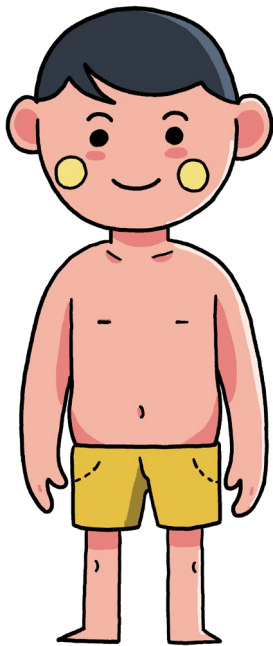
- Young children are at high risk of malnutrition, especially from the age of six months until the age of 2–3 years.

### Wasted

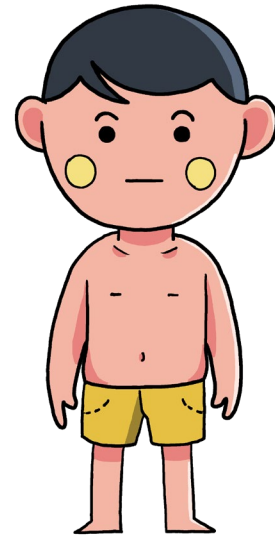
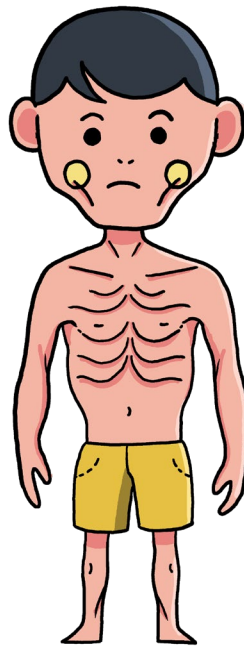
Thinner than normal

### Stunted

Shorter than normal



Normal child



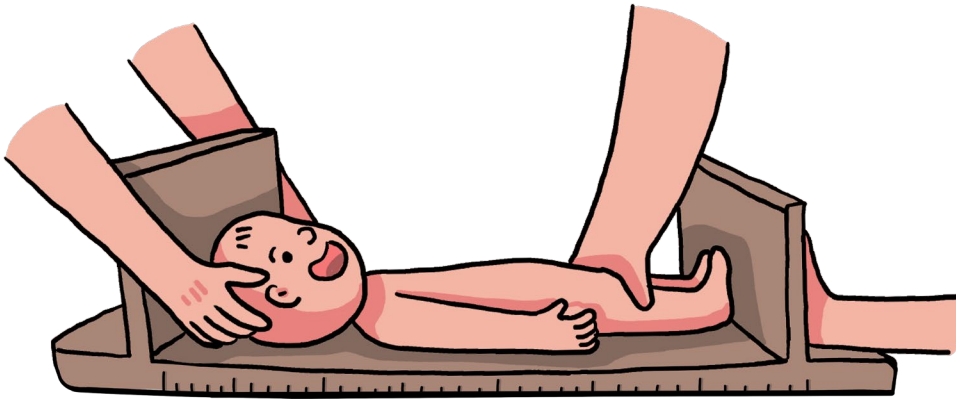
Undernourished children

### Therefore;

- Caregivers should know the nutritional status of young children through regular weighing sessions. Take the weight of young child aged under two years **every month**.
- After each weighing session, plot the weight on growth chart.
  - If the weight of the child falls within the **yellow or red** zone in the growth chart, then the child is **underweight**.
  - If the weight falls within the **green** zone, then the child have a normal weight.


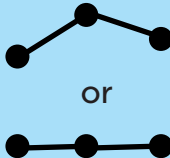



- Take height of children less than two years of age every three month to ensure proper growth.



- For children above two years of age, height should be measured every six month.

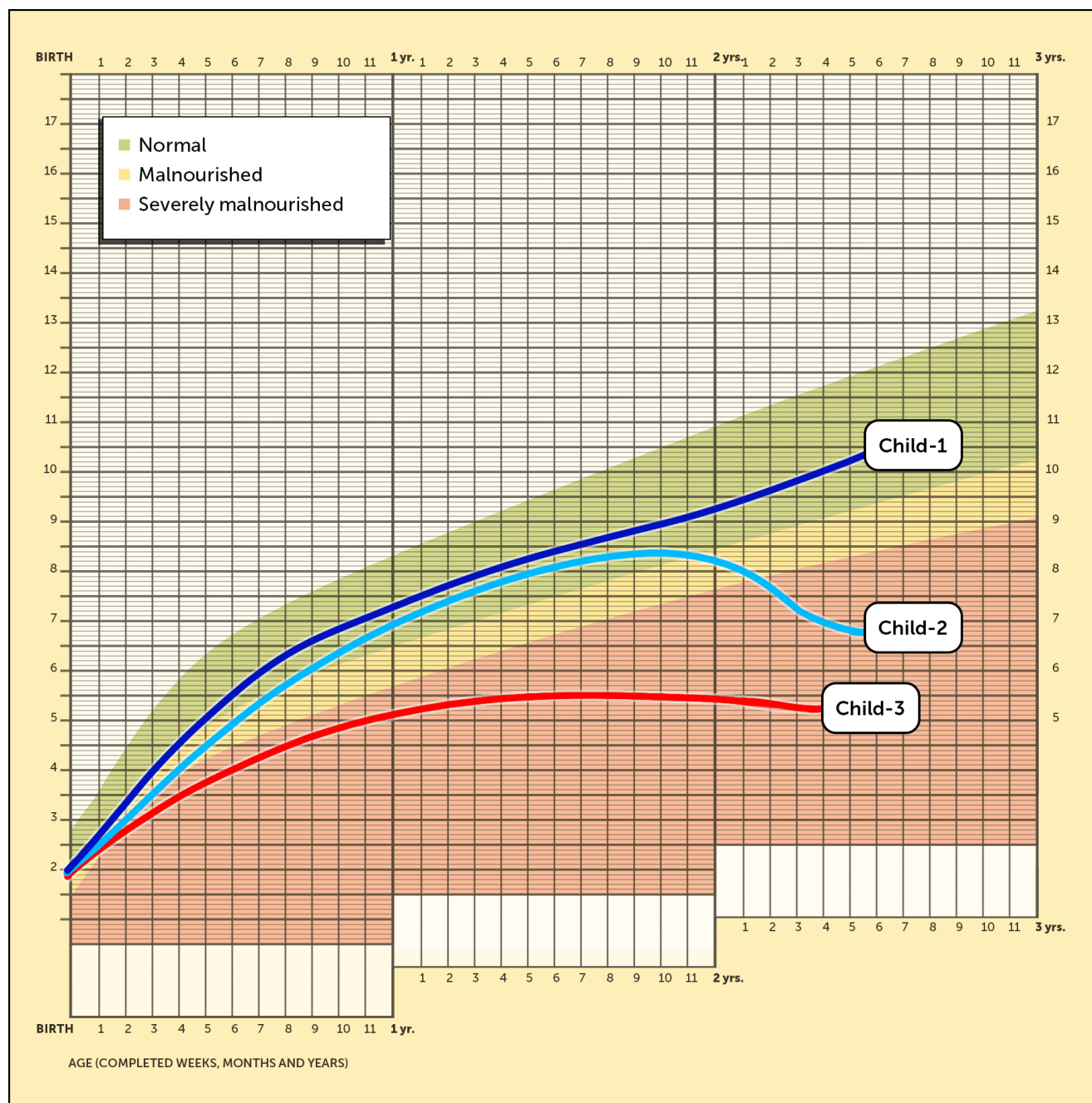


After three consecutive weighing sessions,	
<p>If the weight shows:</p> 	<p><b>Very good!</b> The child gains weight at the healthy rate.</p>
<p>If the weight shows:</p> 	<p><b>Not good!</b> The child loses weight or not gaining any weight, which signals that the child may be sick and/or not eating enough.</p> <p>Check the health of your child at the health centre and/or feed a variety of foods including rice, meat/egg, pulses, colourful fruits and vegetables every day.</p>
<p>If the weight shows:</p> 	<p><b>Very bad!</b> The child loses weight, which is a very dangerous sign. The child is not eating enough.</p> <p>Immediately check the health of your child and get treatment if necessary. Feed a variety of foods including rice, meat/egg, pulses, colourful fruits and vegetables every day. Increase feeding frequency two times than usual. Immediately check the health of your child and get treatment if necessary. Feed a variety of foods including rice, meat/egg, pulses, colourful fruits and vegetables every day. Increase feeding frequency two times than usual.</p>

Source: Author's own elaboration



## Child growth chart



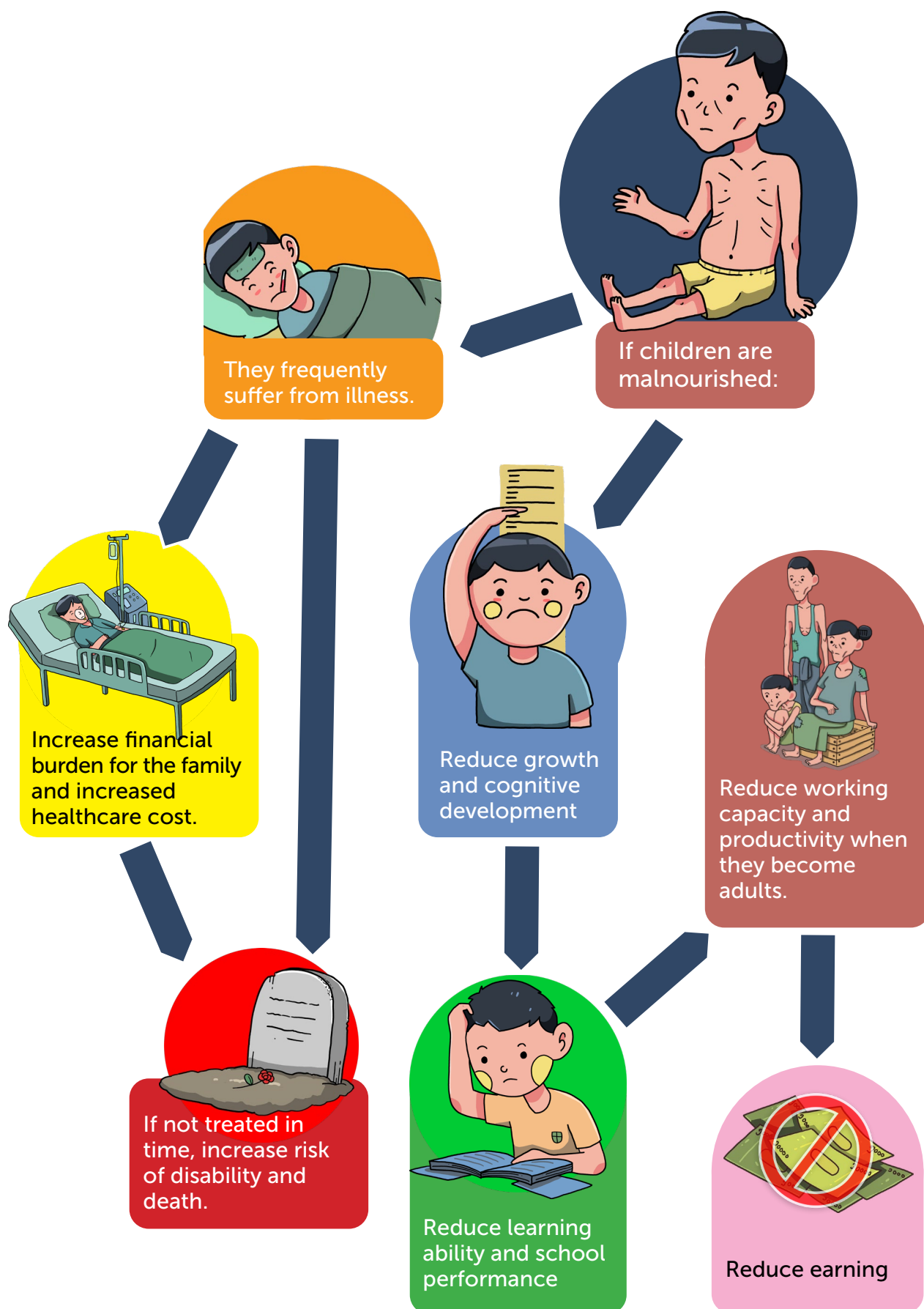
Source: Yin, C.S., World Vision, Nilsson, E., UNICEF Myanmar. 2019. Mother-to-Mother support improves nutrition practices. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/myanmar/stories/mother-mother-support-improves-nutrition-practices>

Topic 2:

# **Consequences of malnutrition**

## What will happen when your child is malnourished?

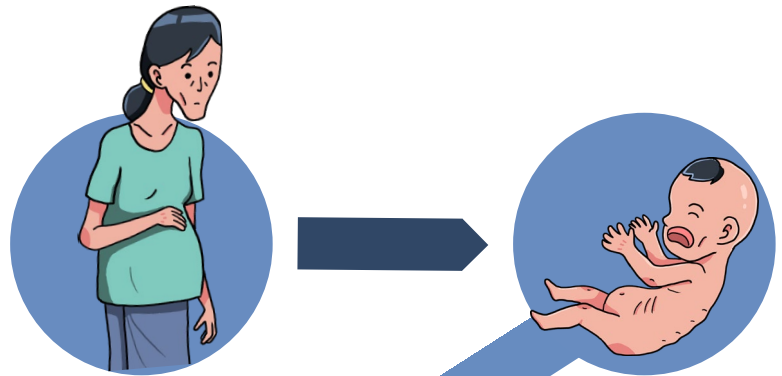
The figure below summarizes some of the consequences of malnutrition in both childhood and adult life.



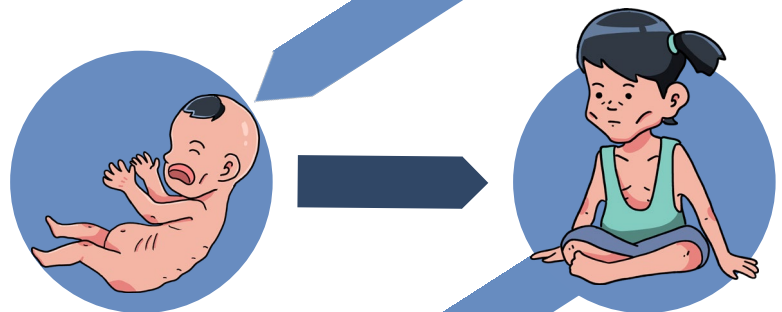
## Intergenerational cycle of malnutrition

If malnutrition is not treated in time,  
then it will pass from generation to generation.

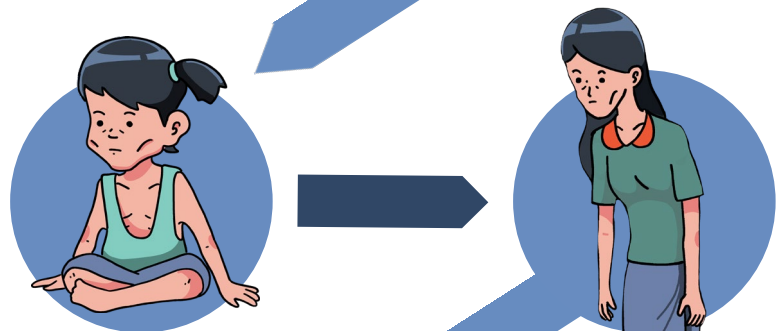
- Undernourished women are more likely to give birth to a low-birth-weight baby.



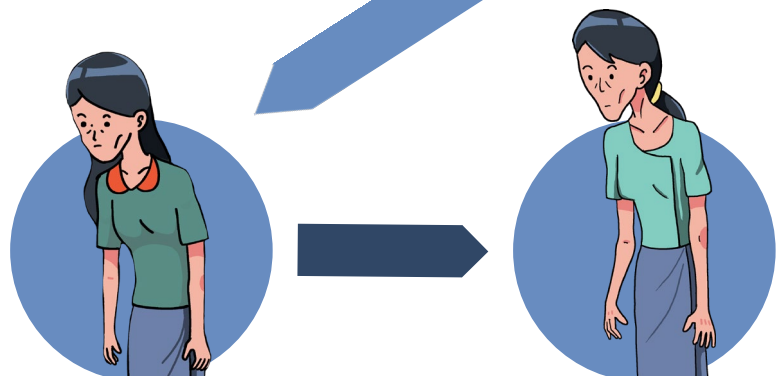
- Low-birth-weight baby, in absence of proper nutrition, becomes undernourished child.



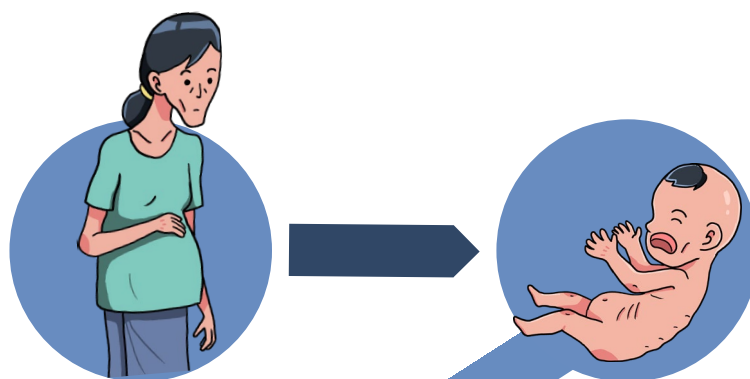
- An undernourished child, if not treated in time or fed well, becomes an undernourished adolescent.



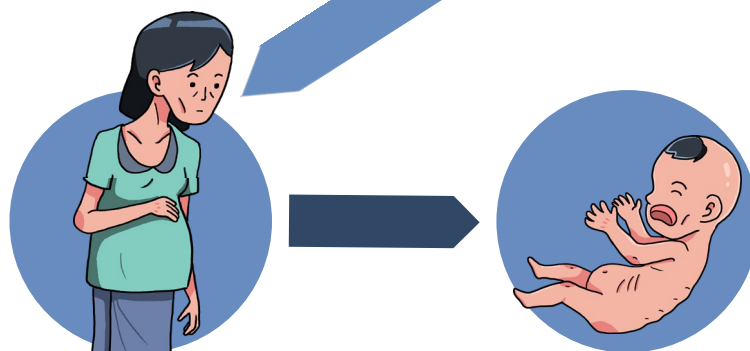
- Undernourished adolescent girl, if does not eat healthy and nutritious diet, has a higher chance of becoming an undernourished woman.



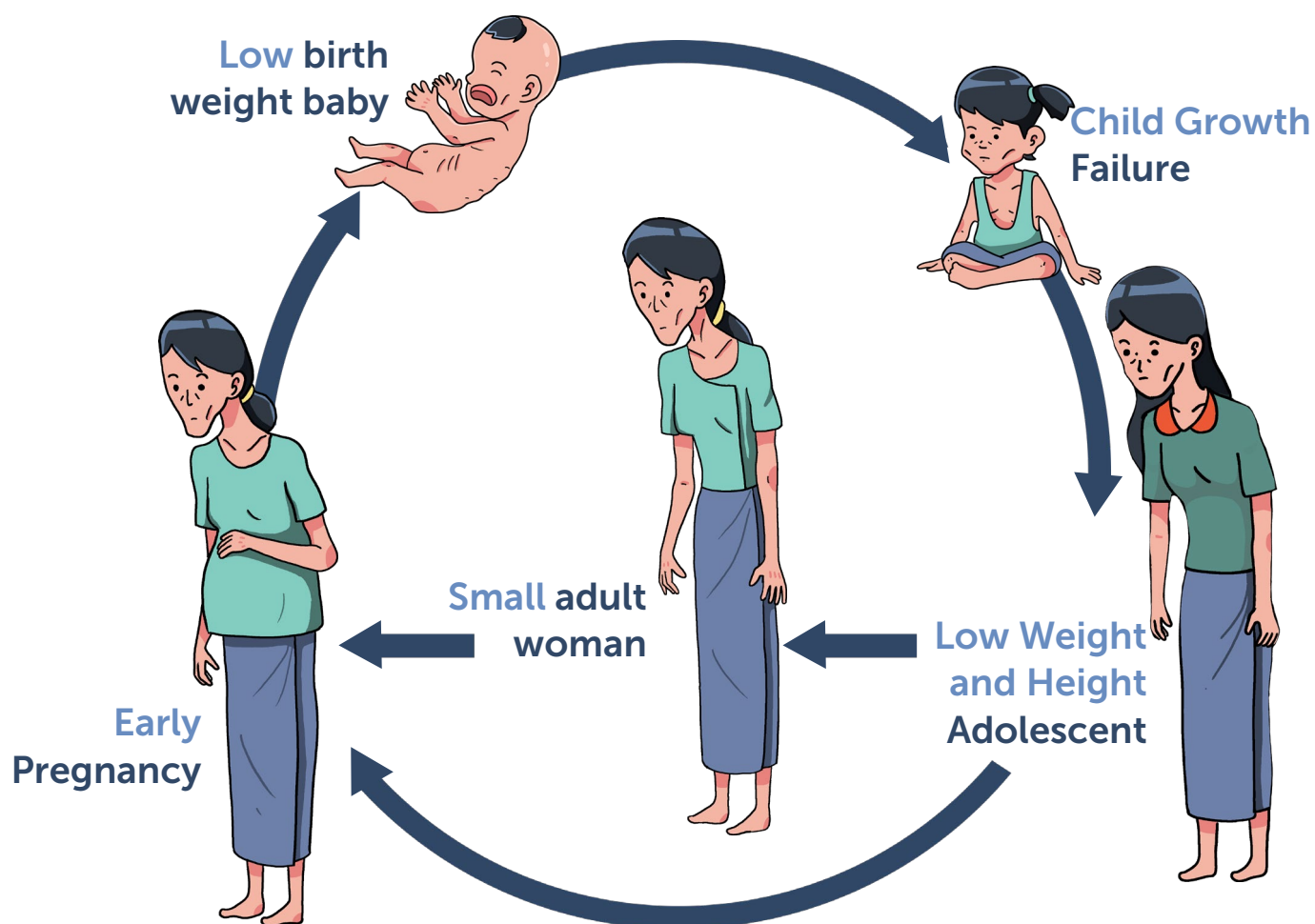
- When the undernourished woman becomes pregnant and does not eat healthy and nutritious diet, she has a higher possibility of giving birth to a low weight baby.



- If the adolescent girl becomes pregnant at an early age, there is even a higher possibility of giving birth of low-birth-weight baby.



- Again, the low-birth-weight baby, if not fed well, becomes an undernourished child and the cycle continues. If we do not act at any point, malnutrition passes from generation to generation.



Topic 3:

# **Causes of malnutrition**

There are many reasons why a child or an adult becomes undernourished. The causes vary from person to person but we can divide them into **immediate**, **underlying** and **basic causes**.

## Immediate causes

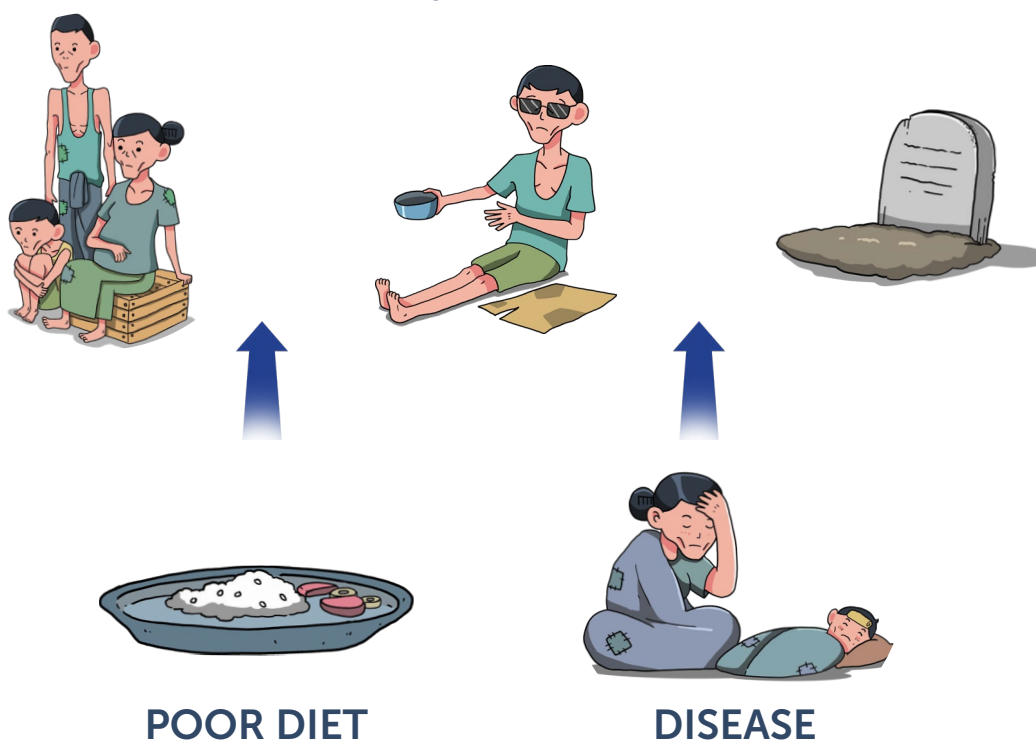
Poor diet is an immediate cause of malnutrition for children, women and men. Poor diets do not include enough of the right foods and nutrients. Children may have poor diet due to:

- insufficient breastmilk;
- lack of weaning food at the right time; and
- lack of variety of foods or insufficient food intake.

**Disease** is another immediate cause of malnutrition. Even if children receive good nutrition, **the diseases like diarrhoea or pneumonia** can make them undernourished because sick children may:

- not eat much;
- absorb few nutrients;
- lose nutrients from the body; and
- use up nutrients in the body more quickly (e.g. during fever).

## MALNUTRITION, DISABILITY and DEATH





## Underlying causes

Underlying causes are the factors that cause poor diets and diseases.

These include:

**a. Family food shortage.** Families may experience a food shortage due to:

- lack of money for food;
- low production of family food;
- inadequate storage and preservation methods, which result in food spoilage; and
- poor choices about what to eat and what types of foods to buy.

**b. Inadequate care and feeding practices**

- Caregivers may not have the knowledge, time or money to care for themselves or other family members properly. This may result in inadequate care and feeding practices.

**c. Poor living conditions** due to overcrowding, lack of access to safe and clean water as well as inadequate sanitation can increase the risk of food-borne infections.

**d. Poor health services** due to shortage of medical supplies and inadequate skilled health staffs. All these conditions may increase the risk of diseases.

**e. Role of women in nutrition**

- In most families, women are responsible for childcare, food production, food purchase, and food preparation. Women's workloads and their social roles within the family can be important underlying causes of malnutrition. When women have heavy workloads, they may not have time to prepare diverse foods. If women have little authority and little control over resources (e.g. land, money), this also affects the type of care and foods they can give different family members. Men and other family members must acknowledge this important role and they should support women by sharing the workload and helping to provide nutritious food for the family.





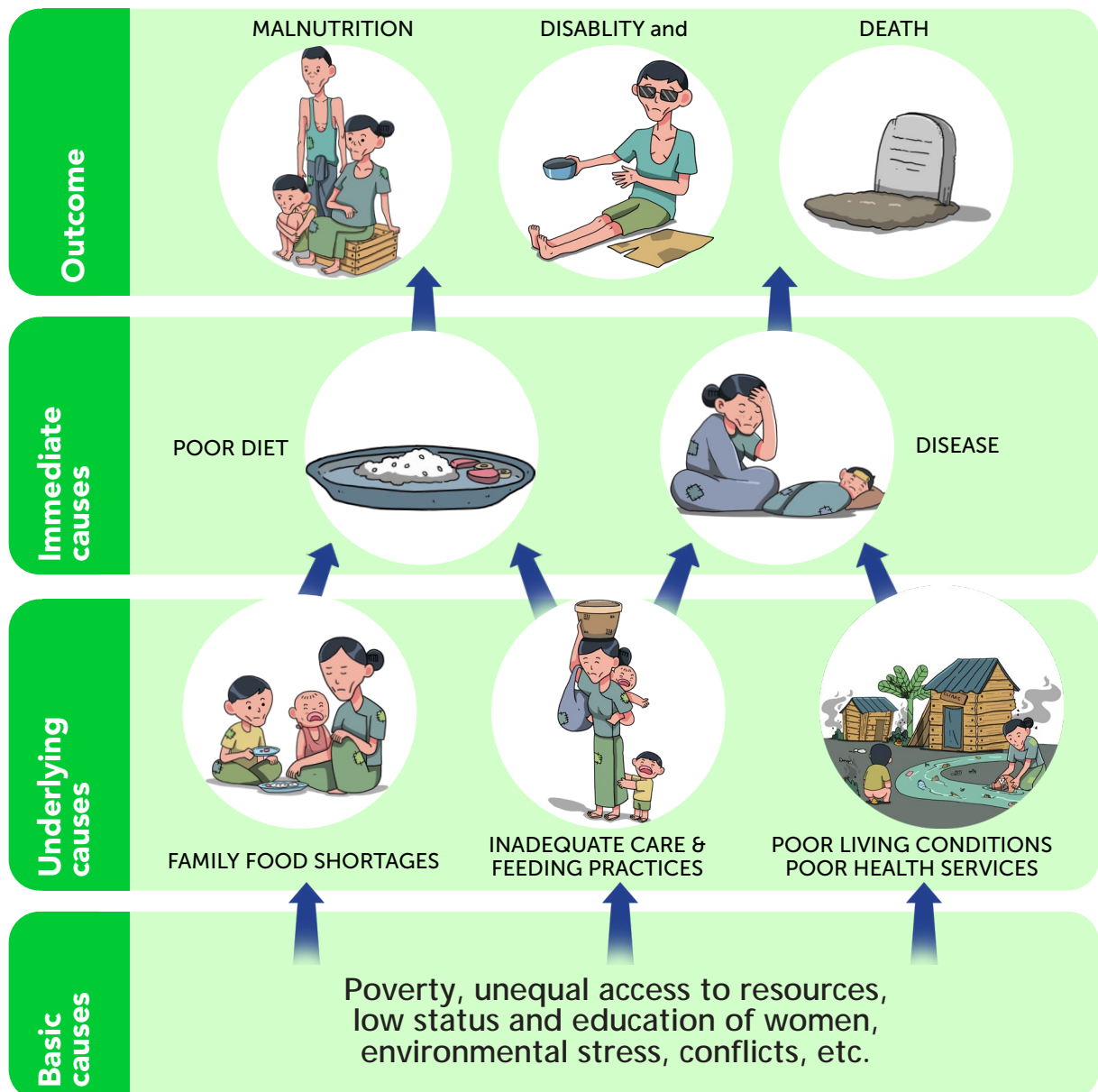
## Basic causes

For each underlying cause, there are deeper causes. These may include:

- poverty;
- lack of employment opportunities;
- unequal access to resources;
- the low status and education of women;
- lack of health, education and other social services; and
- political unrest and conflict.

The figure below demonstrate the reasons why a person, family or community can be malnourished.

Conceptual framework of malnutrition



# Topic 4: **functions of Food**

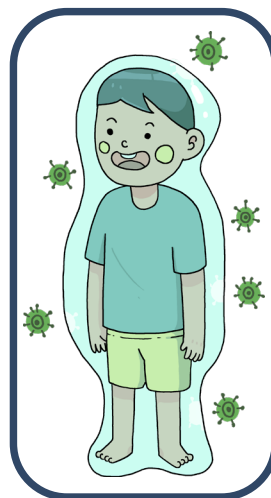
- We all need food for survival.  
Food provides energy to perform work.



- Foods are essential for growth.



- Foods protect the body against illness and keep us healthy.

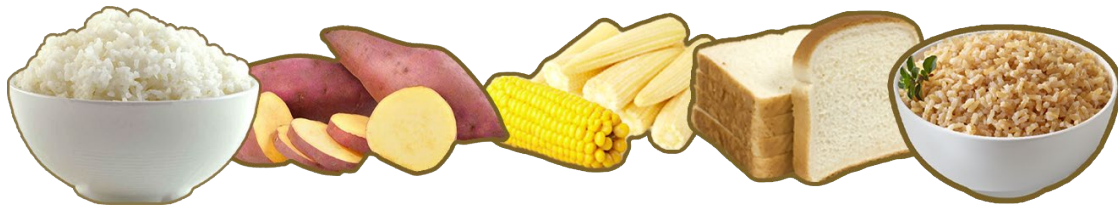


## Food groups

Foods can be generally classified into different groups: energy giving, bodybuilding and body-protecting foods based on the highest level of nutrients contained in them.

### 1. Cereal and products (mostly whole grain) and tubers

- These foods include **grains and tubers** such as rice, bread, noodles, vermicelli, potatoes, sweet potatoes, yam, taro, etc.
- They mainly provide energy.
- They also help the body to grow.



### 2. Protein foods

- These foods include meat, chicken, fish, liver, prawns and other seafood, eggs, milk and milk products.
- They mainly help the body to grow.
- They also provide energy and protect against illnesses.
- These foods include beans, lentils, peas, chickpeas, mung beans, soybeans, groundnuts, and seeds such as sunflower and sesame.
- They mainly help the body to grow and repair.



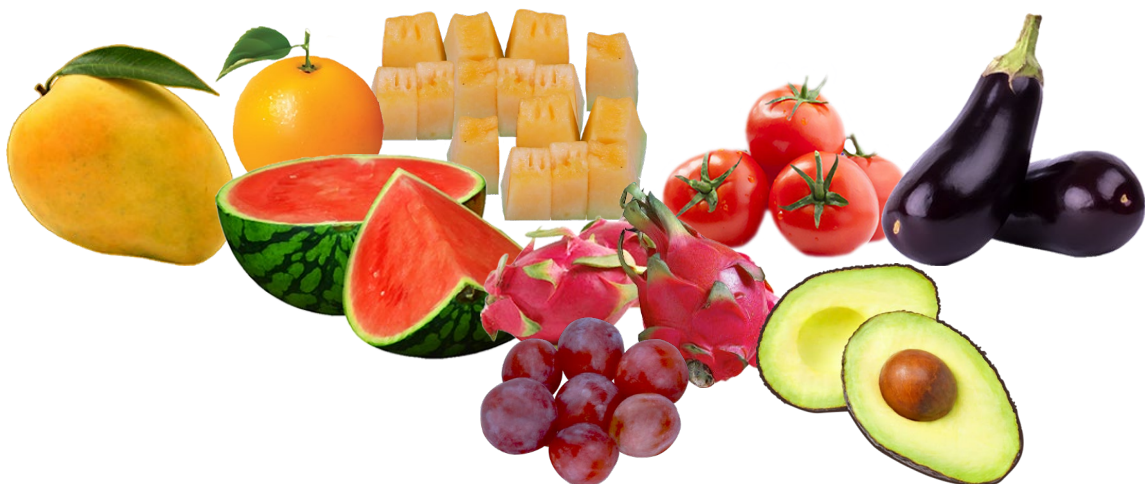
### 3. Vegetables

- These foods include all green leafy vegetables such as watercress, spinach, moringa leaves, amaranth leaves, and Bok choy and all yellow fruits and vegetables such as mango, papaya, orange, carrot, and pumpkin.
- They are essential for vision, growth, development, and disease prevention.



### 4. Fruits

- These include cabbage, long bean, okra, cauliflower, white radish, tomato, eggplant, watermelon, banana, pineapple, apple, grape, dragon fruit etc.
- They provide different vitamins and minerals, which protect us from various illnesses.
- Yellowish/orange: grapefruit, mango, melon, orange, papaya, carrot, etc. colour
- Red colour : strawberry, watermelon, dragonfruit, tomato, etc.
- Purple colour : grape, plum, eggplant.
- Others : cucumber, onion, white radish, cabbage, cauliflower.



## 5. Fats and oils

Fats and oils contain a concentrated source of food energy. These foods provide energy to promote baby growth, produce milk, keep the body warm and maintain active living. Fats and oils also help transport fat-soluble vitamins such as vitamins A, D, E and K in the body. However, fats and oils should be eaten in small amount because too much intake could lead to excessive weight gain during pregnancy and lactation that would lead to overweight and obesity. Overweight and obese people are more likely to develop diabetes, hypertension and stroke later in life. Avoid intake of trans fat (from hard margarine) that might increase your blood cholesterol level and may increase the chance to develop heart diseases later in life.

**Food sources:** preferably from vegetable sources: peanut oil, sunflower oil, sesame oil and soybean oil. Fats are mostly found in animal foods such as butter, cream, fatty meats, sausages, etc. Consume these animal fats in moderation. Margarine is made from vegetable oils through food processing. Margarine contains a form of fat called "trans fat" which should be avoided as it increases the chance of getting heart diseases. Margarine is usually solid in room temperature, the harder the margarine at room temperature the higher the trans fat content.



## 6. Nuts and seeds

Nuts and seeds are good sources of protein, fats, dietary fibers, vitamins and minerals such as vitamin E, folate and iron, and phytochemicals.

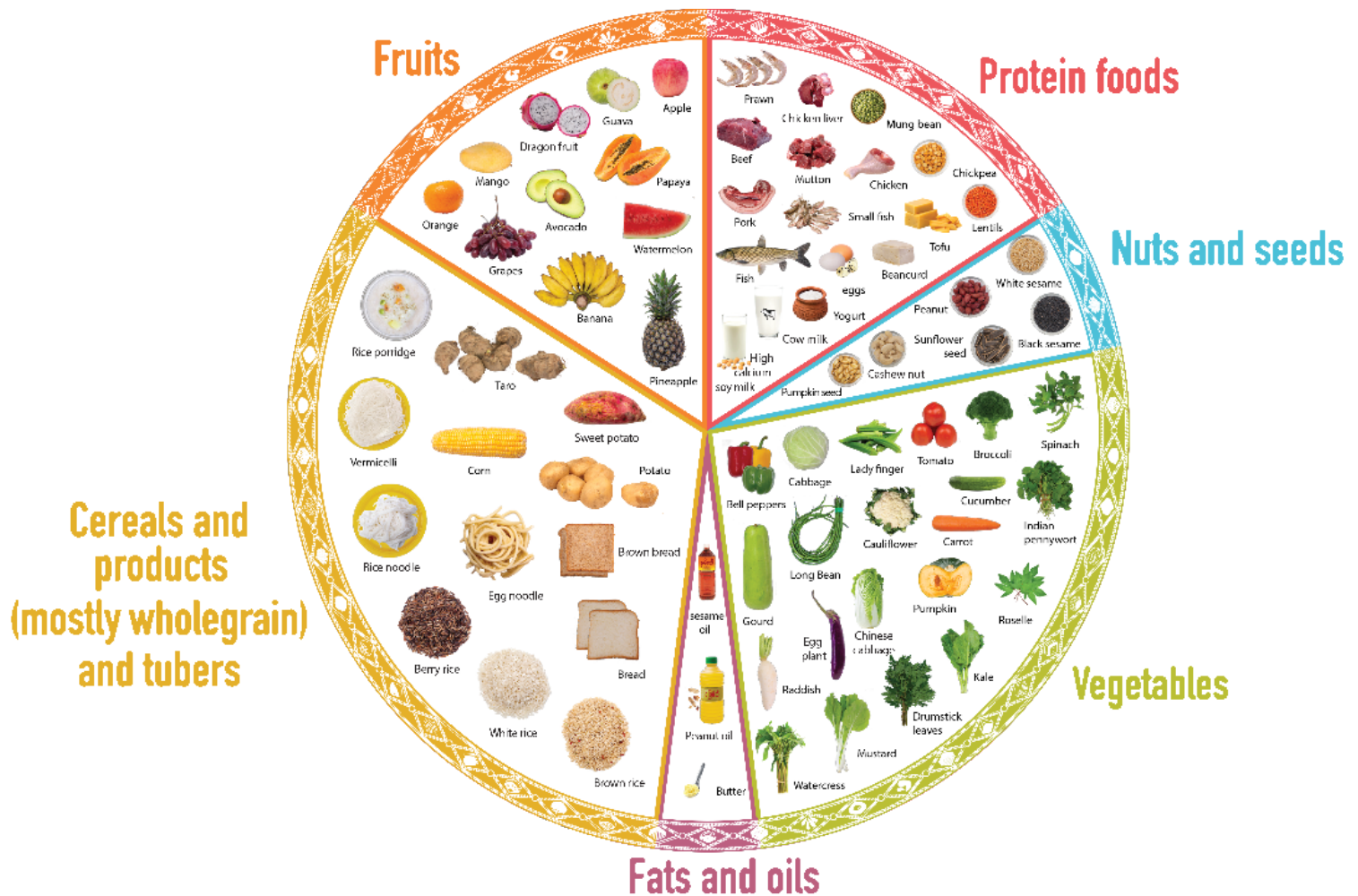
**Food sources:** unsalted peanuts, cashew nuts, sunflower seeds and sesame seeds, etc.





## Tips for healthy eating

- Eat a variety of foods in appropriate quantities from these food groups (what we called it five-star food groups) each day to stay healthy, to have energy and to grow well.
- Eat as many different colourful fruits and vegetables as possible every day.



Source: Zaw, H.M.M., Thar, C.M., Lee, W.T.K. 2022. Myanmar food-based dietary guidelines for pregnant and lactating women. Nay Pi Taw, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0276en>

- Drink clean and safe water everyday (at least eight glasses of water a day) for easy digestion and absorption of food in the body.

Topic 5:

**Nutrition during  
pregnancy and  
breastfeeding**



Pregnant women need extra and nutritious food for themselves and their growing foetus. If a pregnant woman is undernourished, she is more likely to give birth to a low-birth-weight baby.



Breastfeeding women should eat three meals plus two extra small meals or snacks each day (similar picture like above needs to be added).

Breastfeeding women need more energy than during pregnancy because production of breast milk requires so many nutrients from the mother.

Both pregnant and breastfeeding women should eat a variety of locally available foods that are from **six food groups** each day.





Drink plenty of clean water (at least two litres per day) for easy digestion and absorption of nutrients in the body and a lot of fluids such as soup, milk, fruit juice for production of breastmilk.



Do not smoke and do not consume alcoholic beverages during pregnancy and breastfeeding.



## What supplements do you need?

Take iron and folic acid tablets during pregnancy as recommended by the health personnel.

Take iron tablets with meals to increase absorption.



Always use iodized salt to prevent learning disabilities, delayed development, and poor physical growth in the baby and goitre in the mother.



Take vitamin A supplements immediately after birth or within 42 days after delivery to ensure that your baby receives the vitamin A in your breastmilk.

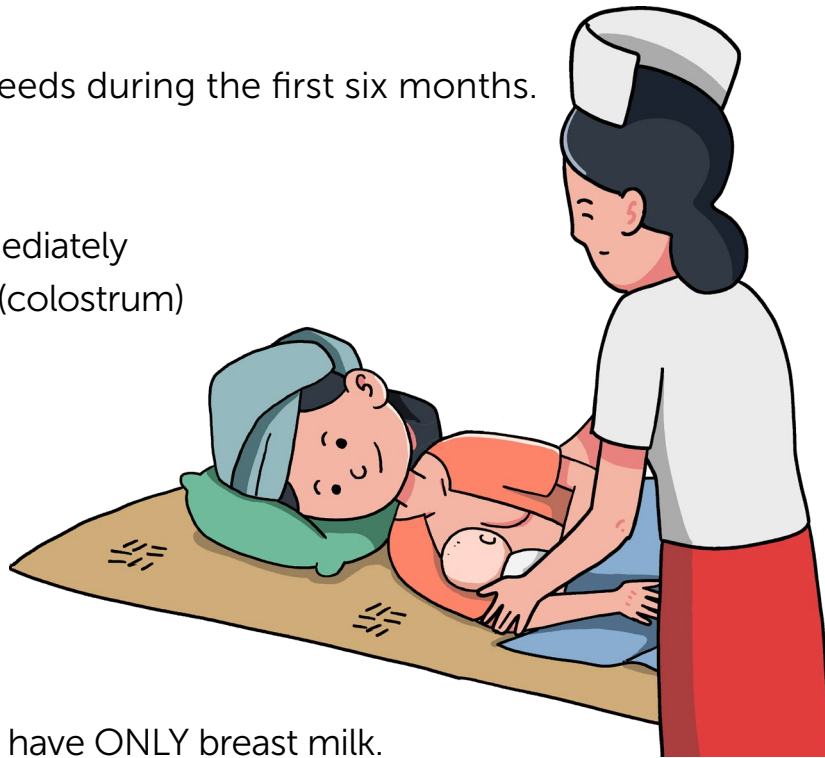
Topic 6:

**Feeding babies aged  
0–6 months**

Breast milk is the only food a baby needs during the first six months.

Therefore,

- Put the baby to your breast immediately after birth and give the first milk (colostrum) to your baby.



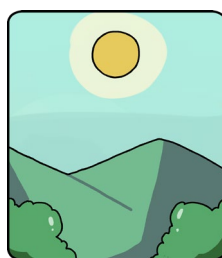
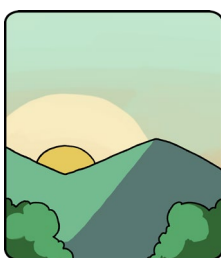
- Up to six months, a baby should have ONLY breast milk.

- Do not feed any food or drink other than breast milk in the first six months. It could make your baby sick (e.g., diarrhoea).



- The more you breastfeed, the more breast milk is produced. Breast-feed your baby anytime when he/she wants, even during the night (at least 8-12 times per day).

8 to 12 times  
per day



- Hygiene is important during breastfeeding.  
Keep the breast always clean and dry.



- Wash hands frequently and especially before touching and breastfeeding the baby.



Topic 7:

**Feeding children aged  
6–23 months**



When the baby completes six months, breastmilk alone is not enough to provide the nutrients required for the growth and development of the baby.

Therefore,

- From six months up to at least two years, feed your baby a variety of foods that are from **four-star food groups** each day along with breastfeeding.



## Changes in feeding frequency, amount and food texture

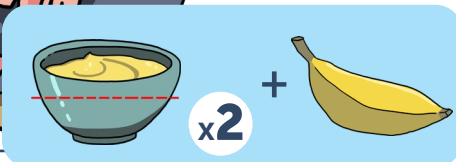
### *Start feeding at 6 months*

- Continue breastfeeding your baby on demand both day and night.
- Breastfeed first before giving other foods.
- When giving complementary foods:
  - **Frequency:** Feed your baby complementary foods twice a day.
  - **Amount:** Give 2 to 3 tablespoonful each feeding.
  - **Thickness:** The food should be thick enough to be fed by hand.
  - **Variety:** Begin with the staple foods like porridge, mashed banana, mashed potato.



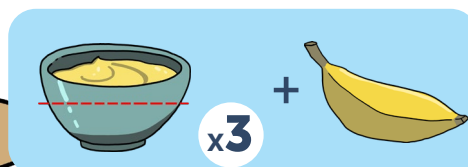
### Feeding children aged 6-9 months

- Continue breastfeeding your baby on demand both day and night.
- Breast milk supplies half of the baby's energy needs from 6 up to 12 months.
- Breastfeed first before giving other foods.
- When giving complementary foods:
  - **Frequency:** Feed 2–3 meals plus 1–2 snacks between meals each day.
  - **Amount:** Increases amount gradually to half of 250 ml cup or bowl for each feeding.
  - **Thickness:** Increases amount gradually to half of 250 ml cup or bowl for each feeding.
  - **Variety:** Feed a variety of foods that are from four-star food groups every day.



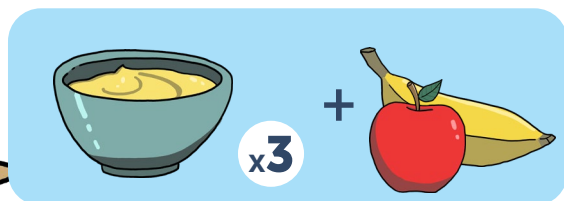
### Feeding children aged 9-12 months

- Continue breastfeeding your baby on demand both day and night.
- Breastfeed first before giving other foods.
- When giving complementary foods:
  - **Frequency:** Feed 3–4 meals plus 1–2 snacks between meals each day.
  - **Amount:** Feed half of 250 ml cup or bowl.
  - **Thickness:** Feed finely chopped family foods, finger foods and sliced foods.
  - **Variety:** Feed a variety of foods that are from four-star food groups every day.



## Feeding children aged 12-24 months

- Continue breastfeeding your baby on demand both day and night.
- Breast milk continues to make up about one third (1/3) of the energy needs of the young child from 12 up to 24 months.
- Breastfeed first before giving other foods.
- Encourage the child to eat by herself/himself.
- When giving complementary foods:
  - **Frequency:** Feed 3–4 meals plus 1–2 snacks between meals each day.
  - **Amount:** Give a full cup (250 ml) or bowl each feeding.
  - **Thickness:** Give family foods cut into small pieces, finger foods, sliced foods.
  - **Variety:** Feed a variety of foods that are from four-star food groups every day.



## Responsive feeding

- Be patient and do not hurry children. They may eat a bit, play a bit, and then eat again.
- Do not force your baby to eat.
- Sit with children and encourage them to eat by talking with them and telling them how good the food is.
- Give them their own plates and spoons to make sure they eat their share.
- Mix foods together if a child picks out and eats only favorite foods.
- Make mealtimes happy times.
- Make mealtimes interesting learning times; for example, teach the names of foods.



## Hygiene

Good hygiene is important to avoid diarrhoea and other illnesses.

Therefore,

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before preparing food for the child.
- Use clean water to wash and cook the food.
- Use clean and dry spoons, cups, towels, bowls or other utensils to feed the child.
- Store the foods in a safe hygienic place.
- Wash your hands and your baby's hands before feeding.





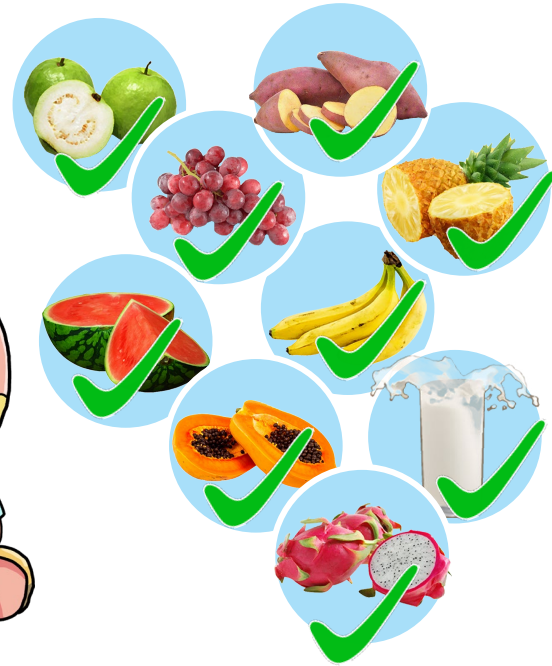
## Healthy snacks for young children

In addition to nutritious meals, healthy snacks add nutrients in the diet.

Therefore,

Feed the children following snacks/drinks:

- Boiled cassava, pumpkin, or sweet potato, mashed with oil or eaten in pieces.
- Ripe fruit such as mango, papaya, banana, and guava.
- Cow milk.
- Fresh fruit juice.



## Unhealthy snacks for young children

Introduction of unhealthy snacks and drinks in early days make children addicted to these foods and cause nutrient deficiency or excesses.

Therefore, avoid feeding the following unhealthy snacks to your child.

- potato chips and other salty or fried food
- cakes
- sweets and biscuits
- tea or coffee
- condensed milk or milk powder
- sodas and artificial juices.



Topic 8:

**Proper cooking methods  
for conserving  
nutrients**

Unhealthy food preparation and cooking practices may cause losses of valuable nutrients. For conserving nutrients, healthy practices should be followed while preparing foods.

1. Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables with clean water before cutting because washing vegetables after cutting causes nutrient loss in the water.



2. Cut vegetables in big chunks to protect nutrients from loss.



3. Avoid peeling some fruits and vegetables (e.g., apple, carrot, potato, squash, cucumber etc.) as peeling may lose vitamins and minerals in the peels.



4. A healthy way to cook vegetable is to steam or stir-fry them with the lid on the cooking pot to avoid loss of nutrients.



- 5.** Cover the pot while cooking food to protect nutrients from loss.



- 6.** Gently wash rice in clean water before cooking. Do not wash it more than twice or rub during washing, as important nutrients can be lost this way. Do not throw away water from cooked rice; the water-soluble vitamins will be lost with water.



- 7.** Soak dried beans overnight in clean water before cooking. Throw away the soaking water and use clean water for cooking. This helps reduce cooking time and prevent gas in the stomach.





- 8.** Meat must be thoroughly cooked to kill all the harmful germs in it. When reheating meat, heat it to boiling point.



- 9.** Add salt when food is cooked. Adding salt in the beginning of cooking may cause draining of vitamins and minerals and the iodine present in the iodized salt may evaporate.



Topic 9:

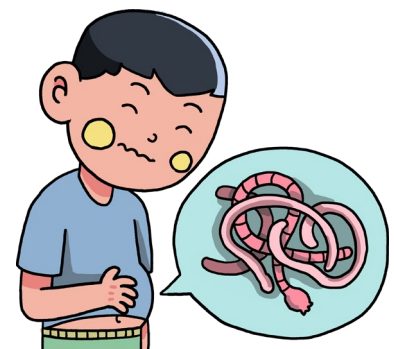
**Keeping food  
safe and  
clean**

Foods provide nutrients, but when it is safe. Otherwise, it may cause various illnesses. To keep food safe, the following practices should be adopted.

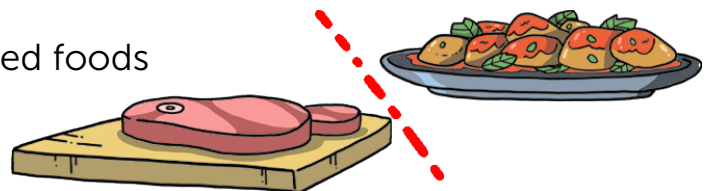
1. All foods that are not eaten raw should be well cooked to kill bacteria.



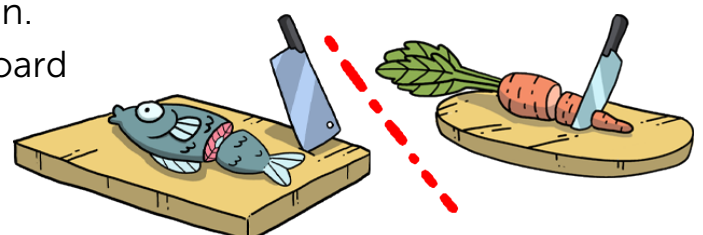
2. Especially meat (beef, pork, chicken) should be well cooked as eating undercooked meat can lead to worms.



3. Keep raw meat separate from cooked foods and other ready-to-eat foods.



4. Never use the same chopping board for raw meat and ready-to-eat foods without washing the board and knife thoroughly in between. Better to keep a separate chopping board for raw meat.



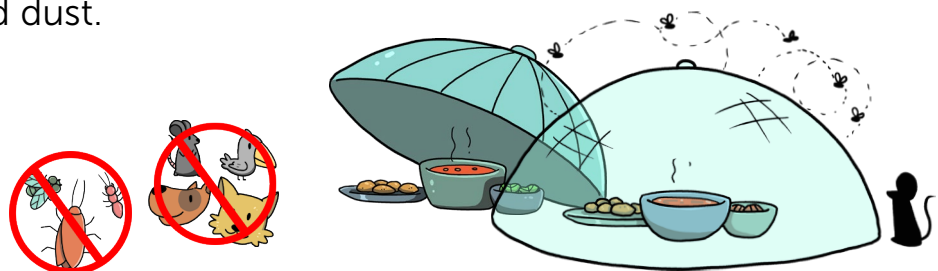
- 5.** Leftover food should always be kept in clean covered containers and kept in cool places. This food should be reheated until piping hot before eating. However, leftovers should not be reheated more than once and should be used within 1–2 days of cooking.



- 6.** Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating to remove possible pesticide residues, soil, and/or bacteria.



- 7.** Cooked food should always be protected from insects, animals, and dust.



## Personal hygiene

Personal hygiene is very important during preparation, serving and eating food. General tips for good personal hygiene while preparing foods are:

**1.** Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water and dry them with a clean towel at each of these times:

- before cooking and eating food;
- after touching raw meat;
- after touching raw eggs;
- after going to the toilet;
- after washing the baby's bottom; and
- after touching the bin.



**2.** Tie back or cover long hair with a clean scarf before preparing food.



**3.** Keep fingernails short and clean.



- 4.** Cover all wounds or sores with a waterproof dressing before preparing food.



- 5.** Do not cough or sneeze over food.



## Kitchen hygiene

The food is most likely to be contaminated with germs if food preparation environment is not clean. Therefore, it is very important to keep kitchen and the eating-place clean to protect food from contamination. To provide a clean environment for food preparation, the following practices should be adopted.

1. Cooking surfaces should be cleaned properly with soap and water.
2. Always keep kitchen utensils such as knives, boards, cloths, plates, and pots clean.
3. The kitchen should have adequate lighting and ventilation.
4. Ensure having adequate supply of clean water and cleaning materials.
5. Always wash chopping tables and utensils before food preparation begins.
6. Keep kitchen bin covered and empty daily.
7. Sweep kitchen floor daily.
8. Keep pets and all domesticated birds and animals out of the kitchen at all times including night.
9. Always ensure using clean utensils for serving food as this prevents the spread of bacteria.



Topic 10:





# **Household food production**



You can produce a variety of foods in a well-planned home garden.



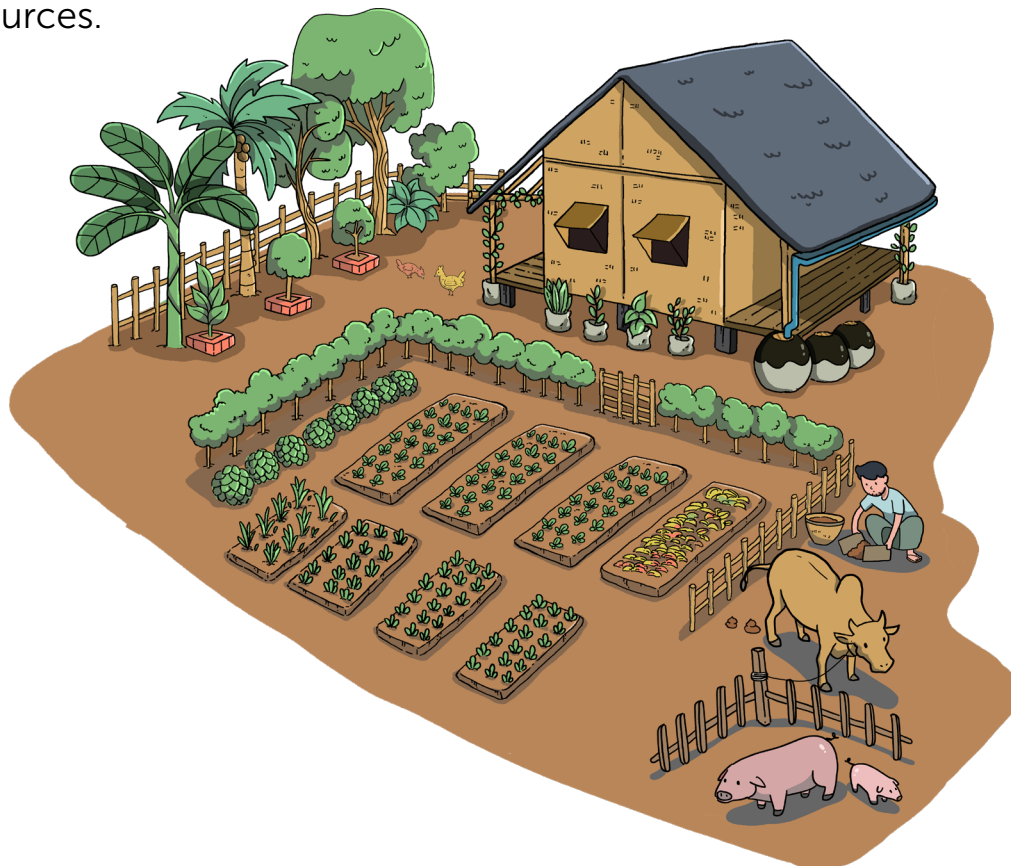
The following crops can be planted in your home garden to have access to diverse foods.

<b>Energy-giving foods</b>	Maize, cassava, potato, sweet potato	
<b>Bodybuilding foods (plant-based protein foods)</b>	Chickpea, green gram, beans	
<b>Body-protecting, Vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables</b>	Green leafy vegetables: garden cress, spinach, amaranth, roselle, watercress, mustard, lettuce moringa etc.  Yellow fruits and vegetables such as mango, papaya, carrot, pumpkin etc.	
<b>Body-protecting other fruits and vegetables</b>	Avocado, lichi; cauliflower, capsicum, broccoli, okra, brinjal, cabbage, eggplant, raddish etc.	

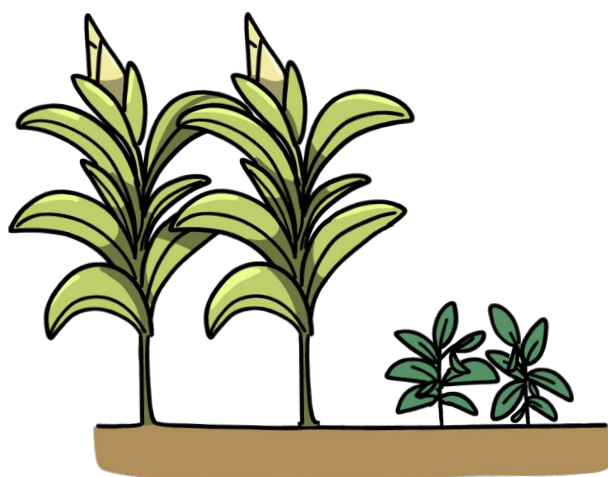
Source: Author's own elaboration

You can plant and grow many foods in your garden. But you should know which crops are suitable in the garden. If you do not know what to plant and when to plant, you can always ask the nearby agrovet shop or agriculture extension staffs or even an NGO staff may have information.

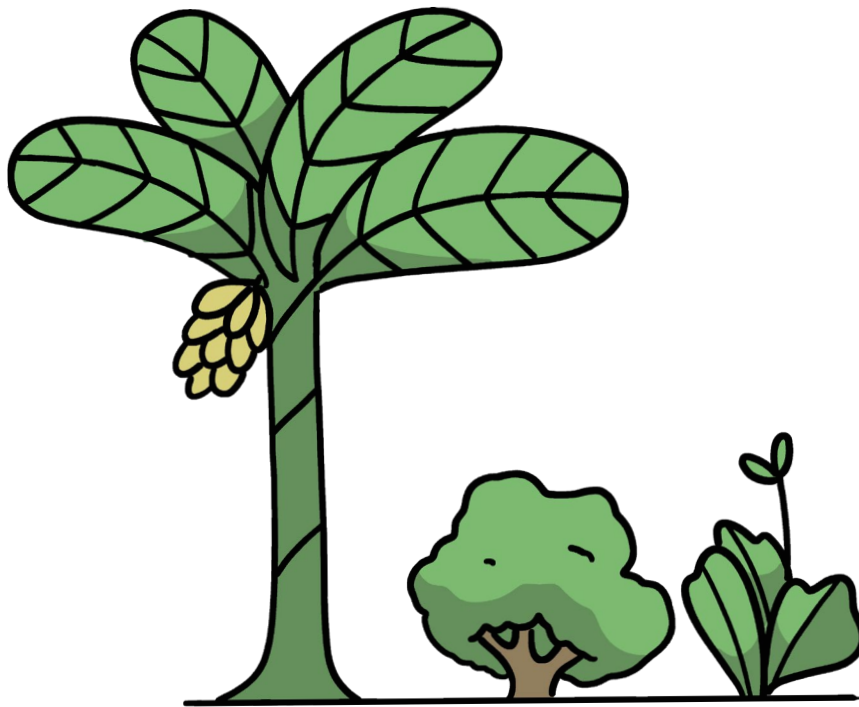
Improved methods can be applied to grow more food in your garden with fewer resources.



1. Leguminous crops have nods in their roots, which capture the nitrogen present in the air and provide nitrogen to the soil. Therefore,
  - Plant many different types of crops together especially planting other crops mixed with leguminous crops. Maize and beans can be planted together.



- 2.** Planting various crops with different height together saves space and protect the moisture of the soil. Therefore,
- Plant crops with different height together such as banana, papaya, maize, cassava, yam, and sweet potato.



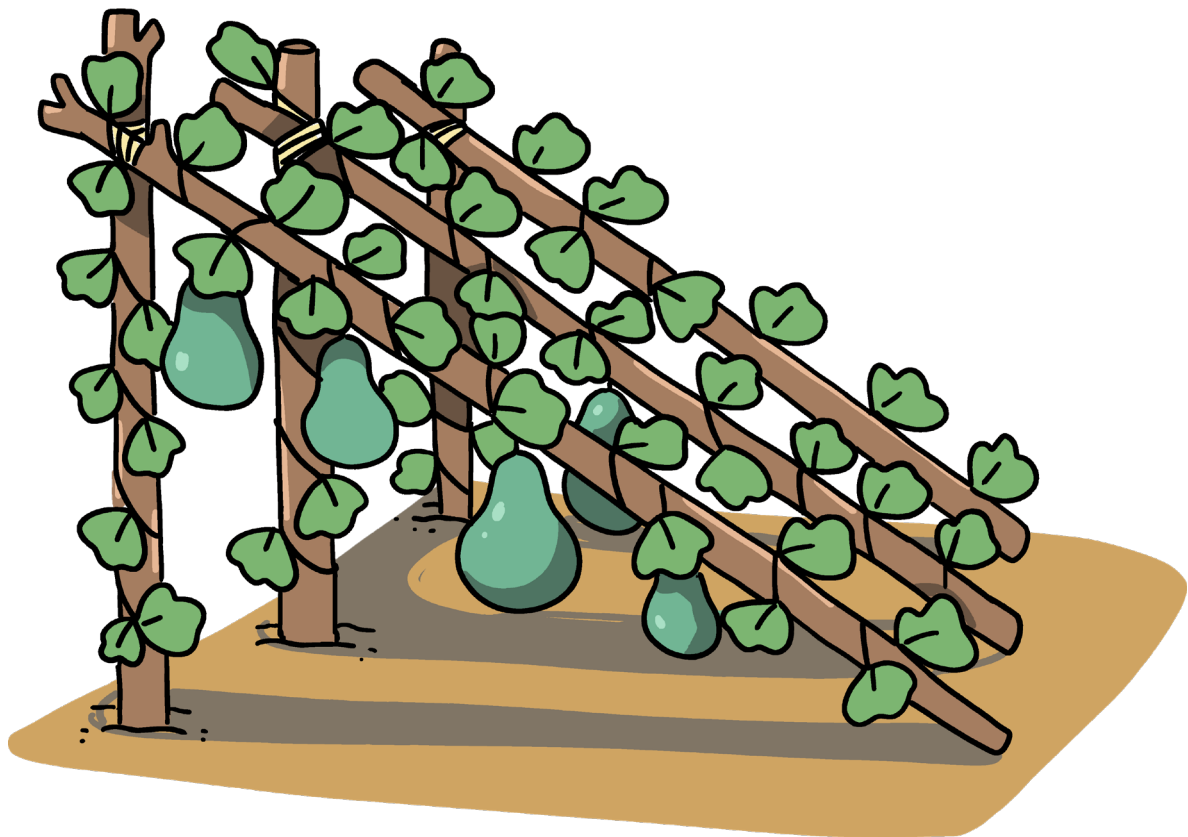
- 3.** Planting big trees at the edge of the garden protects the soil from overheating from sun light. Therefore,
- Plant fruit and nut trees as shade on the edges of gardens and fields.



4. Bushy plants can protect the garden from livestock. Therefore,
- Plant acacia, jatropha, bamboo, moringa, cassava and at the edge of the garden.



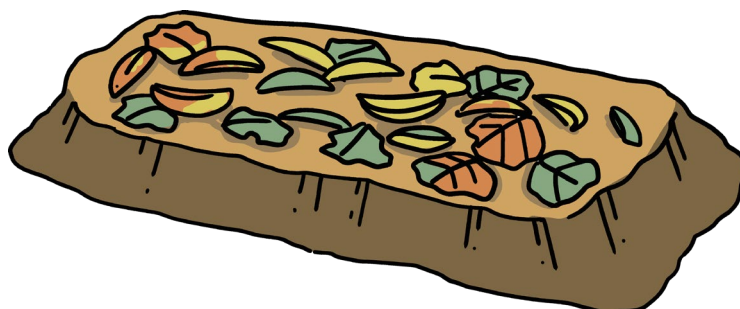
5. Climbing vegetables can save space. Therefore,
- Plant climbing vegetables such as beans and gourds to produce more vegetables in a limited space.





**6.** Covering the soil conserves moisture of the soil and helps the vegetables grow in the water scarce seasons. Therefore,

- cover the soil with organic material such as compost, grass or leaves.



**7.** During the dry season, the water collected from rainwater can be used to irrigate garden. Therefore,

- collect rainwater from roofs and store for later use.

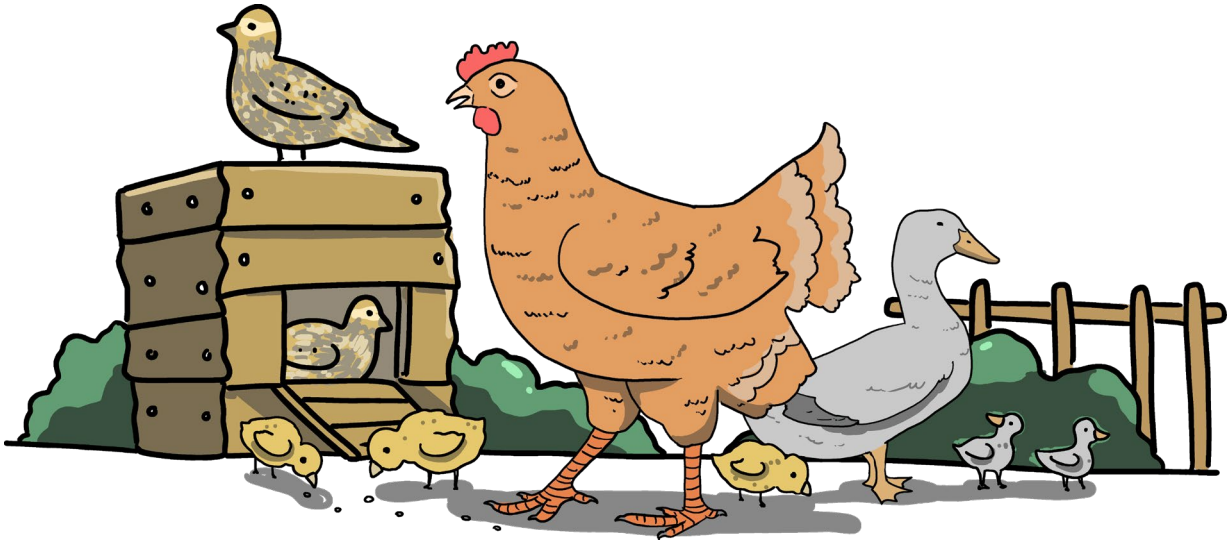


**8.** To save space and water, vegetables can be planted in containers or sacks. Therefore,

- plant vegetables in containers, sacks etc.



- 9.** Poultry can be reared at minimum resources at home. Chicken, duck, and quail can easily be kept for meat and eggs, which are the major sources of animal-based protein foods. If you do not know how to keep these birds,
- look for technical support and training available in your township.
  - Look for the veterinary services to protect poultry from diseases.





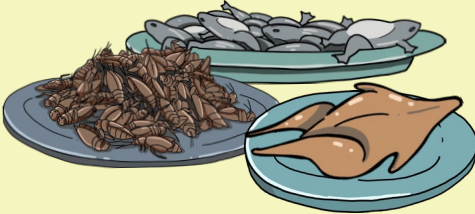
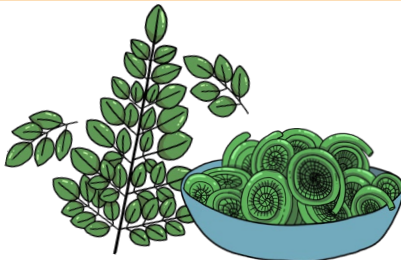

- 10.** Animal manure and compost is a good source of nutrients for crops. Therefore,
- use animal manure to improve the fertility of the soil.



Topic 11:  
**Utilization of  
wild food  
sources**

In Myanmar, a variety of edible wild foods can be collected from the forests. Many people often consider that wild foods are not nutritious. In fact, many wild foods are as nutritious and are sometimes even more nutritious than the foods we buy or grow. In addition, wild foods are available free of cost; and they are mostly organic.

*Even in the forests, we can find foods from five-star food groups.*

S.N.	Food Groups	Example of foods	Example of foods
1.	Energy-giving foods	Wild yams	
2.	Bodybuilding (plant-based protein foods)	Wild beans such as stink beans and others	
3.	Bodybuilding (animal-based protein foods)	Crickets and other variety of insects, small frogs, birds,	
4.	Body-protecting, vitamin A-rich vegetables	Fiddlehead fern, moringa leaves, water cress and other green leafy vegetables	
5.	Body-protecting, other fruits and vegetables	Indian gooseberry, ivy gourd (or) coccinia fruit, trumpet flower, sesbania grandiflora	

Source: Author's own elaboration

**Important to remember!** Over collection or destruction of trees, plants during the collection of wild foods may affect the future availability of wild foods. Protection of the wild food sources can feed us in the future.



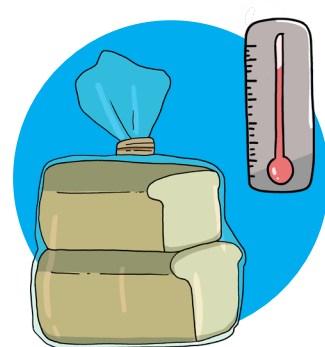
Topic 12:

**Food storage and  
preservation**

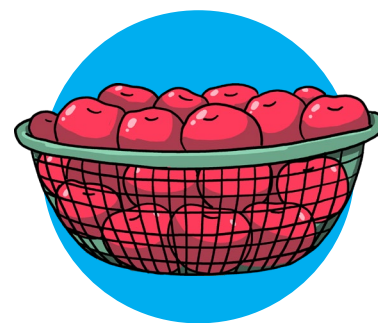
- Foods such as grains and legumes can be stored at room temperature for a long period. If not stored properly, insect can damage these foods. Therefore, store grains and legumes in close containers.



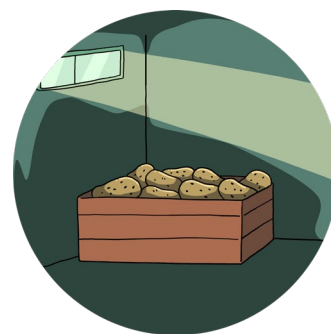
- Store bread in cool and dry places at room temperature.



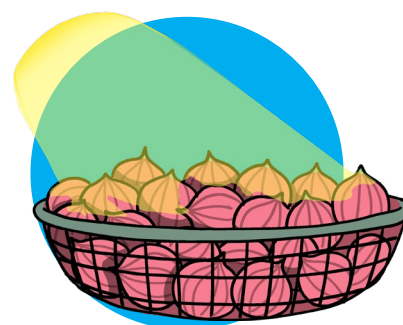
- Store fresh vegetables in cool and dry places with adequate air circulation.



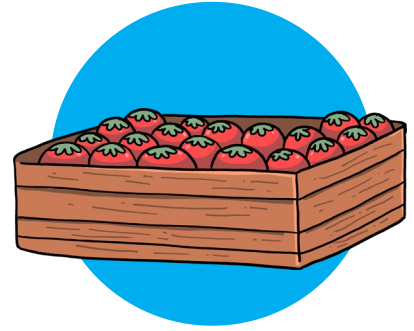
- Store potatoes in cool and well-ventilated but dark places because keeping them in the presence of sunlight may cause sprouting and greening of potatoes.



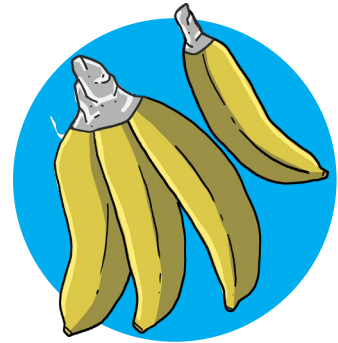
- Dry onions before storing because well-dried onions can be stored for about three months.



- Store tomatoes at room temperature with stalks up.



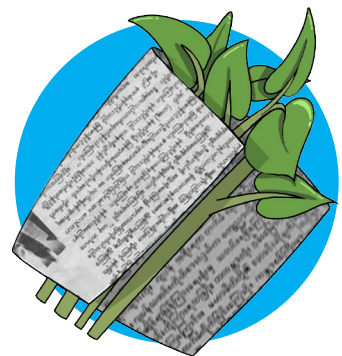
- Store bananas at room temperature.  
Wrap stalks with tin foil for storing longer.



- Dip broccoli and cauliflower stalks in water to retain their moisture content and keep longer.



- Wrap green leafy vegetables with paper towel or newsprint paper for keeping them fresh.



*Foods can be preserved for later use by applying various processing methods*

Drying is the simplest method of food preservation as various fruits and vegetables can be dried under the sun.

- Dry vegetables, when they are plenty, for later use.  
Meat and fish can also be dried and kept for later use.



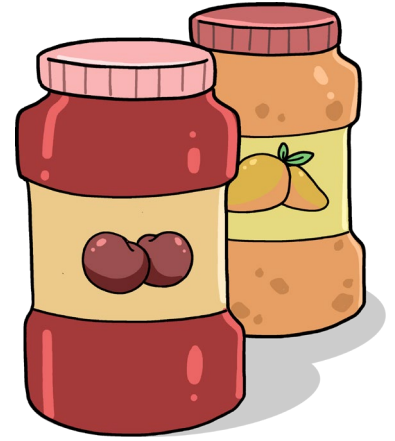
- Make pickles for later use because pickling makes fruits and vegetables last longer and add taste to the food.



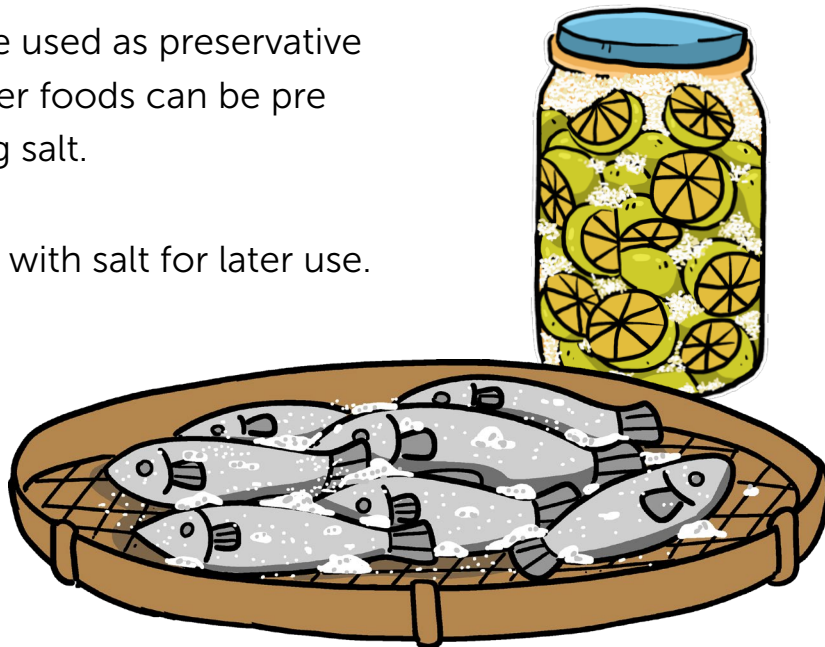
- Make fermented foods for later use as fermentation not only makes food delicious but also adds some nutrients. Shan pickle, fish sauce and bean paste are some examples.



- Make jams out of fruits when they are plenty. Sugar can preserve fruits as jams from different fruits can easily be made by adding sugar.



- Salt can also be used as preservative as fish and other foods can be preserved by using salt.
- Preserve foods with salt for later use.



Topic 13:

# Food budgeting

We should buy nutritious and quality foods with our limited budget.  
While buying foods from the market, think of four places to visit.

1. rice stall
2. legumes and beans stall
3. meat or egg stall
4. fruits and vegetable stalls.

These are the major food groups for nourishing our body.  
Ensure that foods from those food stalls are included in your daily meal.

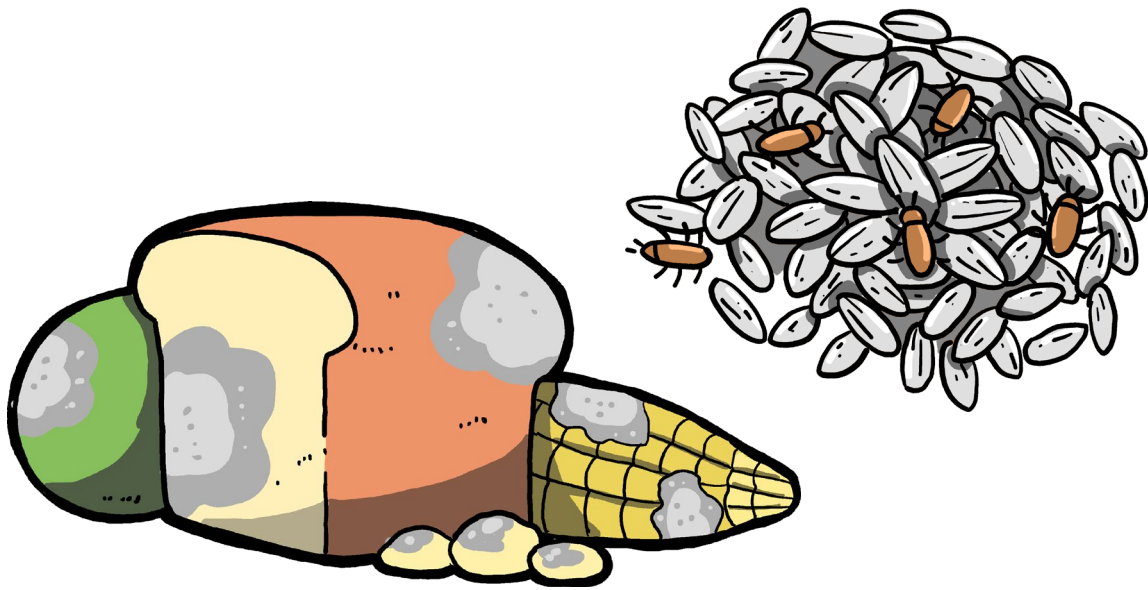
- Buy less expensive but more nutritious foods such as green leafy vegetables.



- Look at the expiry/best before date, while buying packaged foods.



- Do not buy if the food is infested with insects or fungi.



- Look for locally produced foods. These foods are fresh, nutritious but cheaper than the foods that are imported.

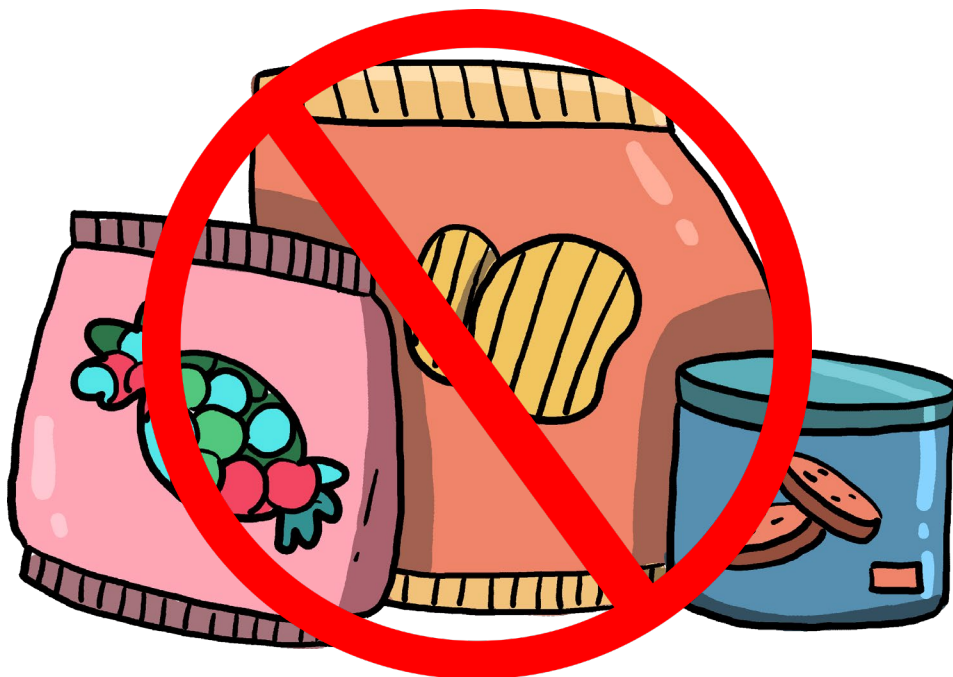




- Buy in bulk, the foods come in cheaper price.



- Avoid too much spending on processed foods such as sugar sweetened beverages, salty snacks, chips, candies etc because these are not nutritious.



# Stay safe and healthy during COVID-19 pandemic



- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Practice physical distancing guidelines:
  - avoid crowded places;
  - stay at least six feet apart from other people; and
  - do not greet others with a handshake or other touch.
- Wear an appropriate mask.
- When coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a flexed elbow or tissue. Then throw the tissue away immediately and wash your hands.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has a fever and cough.
- Do not touch nose, eyes, and mouth unnecessarily.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces with soap and water if you have or suspect you have COVID-19.

- Healthy diet and good nutrition keep you healthy and helps you to fight against infections. Hence, eat variety of healthy and nutritious foods every day.
- Avoid junk foods such as sweets, sugary drinks, salted snacks and fried foods because these foods make you vulnerable to chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart diseases, which are major risk factors of developing severe symptoms of COVID-19.
- Do light physical activities such as gardening or doing household chores to maintain healthy weight and improve immune power.
- Seek medical attention immediately if you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

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Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

