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சுகாதார, போசாக்கு மற்றும் சுதேச வைத்திய அமைச்சு
Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine

මගේ අංකය : MH/ NCoD /NNM/2018
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திகதி
Date

General Circular No. : 01-24/2018

All Provincial Chief Secretaries
All Provincial Secretaries of Health
All Provincial Directors of Health Services
All Regional Directors of Health Services
All Medical Officers of Health
All Heads of Institutions

National Nutrition Month – June 2018 “Right Way to Reduce Abdominal Obesity”

National Nutrition Month 2018 will be held in the month of June, under the theme of “**Right Way to Reduce Abdominal Obesity**” with the intention of uplifting health status of the community through improving their knowledge, attitudes and practices on healthy diet and making them more concerned about reducing abdominal obesity.

Obesity has emerged as a public health problem over the last decade and will continue to be a major contributory factor for the national disease burden. The extra fat deposited around waistline as subcutaneous fat and visceral fat known as abdominal obesity is considered to be harmful and a major risk factor for many non communicable diseases such as heart diseases, hypertension, stroke, diabetes mellitus, breast & colorectal cancers and metabolic syndrome.

Waist circumference is commonly used as a proxy measure to identify abdominal obesity in population screening in adulthood (**According to WHO recommendations, normal waist circumference of a healthy adult: male < 90cm/36 inches, female < 80cm/32 inches**). Abdominal obesity is more apparent among individuals who regularly consume an energy dense diet with high amounts of refined carbohydrates, sugar, saturated fat and trans fat and no or less physical activity. Increased availability and accessibility to fast foods, processed foods, calorie dense foods and rapid urbanization has led to unhealthy dietary patterns and sedentary life style of Sri Lankans in recent decades.

Therefore, reducing the carbohydrate portion of the meals along with substitution of refined carbohydrates rations with unrefined carbohydrates, increasing the protein component of the meal, replacing saturated fat and trans fat with unsaturated fats (poly unsaturated and monounsaturated) and increasing fruit, vegetable and green leafy vegetable consumption and engaging in regular physical activity are recommended to overcome abdominal obesity thus reducing the risk of non communicable diseases in later life.

During National Nutrition Month 2018, it is expected to create public awareness on abdominal obesity, importance of early detection by measuring waist circumference and prevention through modifying dietary carbohydrates, fat and protein intake and increasing physical activity through various activities.

Objectives of the National Nutrition Month 2018:

1. Create awareness among general public on adverse effects of abdominal obesity and importance of its early detection.
2. Promote consumption of foods rich in protein, whole grains and unsaturated fats, in place of refined carbohydrates, saturated and trans fats.
3. Raise awareness on consumption of clean water, natural drinks, fruits, vegetables, green leafy vegetable & nuts as alternatives to sugary food and sugar sweetened beverages.
4. Create a conducive environment for consumption of healthy diet containing protein, unsaturated fats (good fats), fruits, vegetables and whole grains; reduce refined carbohydrate products; and increase physical activity level by strengthening multi-sectoral coordination, community empowerment through advocacy.
5. Promote continuous monitoring of abdominal obesity by measuring waist circumference regularly and introduce appropriate interventions through dietary modification and regular exercise.

National Level Programmes to be conducted during the National Nutrition Month:

1. Inauguration ceremony to be held in Colombo District.
2. Conduct awareness programmes for the general public, in order to achieve above mentioned objectives of the National Nutrition Month 2018, through electronic and print media.
3. Conduct awareness programmes based on the theme of National Nutrition Month 2018 in collaboration with Government and Non-Government Organizations.
4. Healthy food recipes competition among general public on the theme of National Nutrition Month 2018

Provincial, District and Divisional level Programmes:

Organize and conduct programmes based on the theme and objectives of National Nutrition Month 2018, with the initiation and leadership of the health staff.

- Identification of nutritional problems (both under and over nutrition) among under five years old children by assessing nutritional status (measuring length/height, weight), implementation of targeted interventions and close follow up emphasizing the importance of proper IYCF practices in early childhood.
- Raise awareness on limiting unhealthy foods (biscuits, cake, candy bars, doughnuts, chips, bites etc.) and establish healthy food habits in early childhood as a measure of primordial prevention of non communicable diseases.
- Assessment of nutritional status of school children by using age specific charts (height for age and Body Mass Index for age) and raise awareness on importance of maintaining age appropriate Body Mass Index (BMI).
- Increase awareness among school children regarding factors that contribute to abdominal obesity and detrimental health effects (Ischemic Heart Disease, Diabetes, Hypertension, Stroke, and Cancer) of unhealthy foods (refine carbohydrates, sugary food, trans fat, saturated fat and salty food) thus enabling them to adapt healthy dietary habits. Emphasize children on increasing quantity of protein (add eggs, fish, pulses etc.) in their main meals, getting main meals on time (specially breakfast), promote healthy snacks (fruits, yoghurt, nuts like cashew, peanuts, *kottang* etc.) and engaging physical exercises.
- Encourage school children and general public to assess and critically analyze mass media advertisements, with adverse food behaviours and marketing unhealthy food.
- Encourage children and general public to read the calories and fat content in food labels and identify amount of calories, unsaturated fat, saturated fat and trans fat in the food which they purchase.
- Conduct activities to promote consumption of foods with protein, good fats, whole grain meals and increasing level of physical activity for groups of children, youths in sports clubs and village development societies.
- Organize awareness programmes based on above mentioned theme in higher education & technical education institutes with the participation of the students themselves.
- Conduct programmes at workplaces with the participation of officers in the other ministries, institutions, organizations and stakeholders; promote measuring BMI & waist circumference to identify abdominal obesity and promote healthy life style, regular physical activities and healthy diet.
- Conduct advocacy programmes targeting government, non government and political leaders on importance of healthy lifestyle and healthy diet.

For further details and guidance, please contact **Nutrition Coordination Division, Ministry of Health** on **011-2368320/21/23** or mail to nutritioncoordination@gmail.com and following institutions under the Ministry of Health.

- Director, Non Communicable Disease Unit - 0112669599
- Director, Nutrition Division - 0112559250
- Director, Family Health Bureau - 0112699332
- Director, Environment Health, Occupation Health Unit & Food Safety - 0112672004
- Director, Health Promotion Bureau - 0112696606
- Head, Nutrition Division, Medical Research Institute - 0112695999
- Director, Estate and Urban Health Unit - 0112675818

Janaka Sugathadasa

Secretary

Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine