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சுகாதார அமைச்சு
Ministry of Health

මගේ අංකය - MH/ND/33/NNM/2022
எனது இல -
My No. -

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உமது இல -
Your No. -

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திகதி -
Date - 2022.09. 27

Circular No. : 01 - 33 / 2022

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 – October 2022

‘Nutrition at Low-Cost: Know, Find Alternatives, Grow and Share’

National Nutrition Month – 2022 will be declared in October 2022 under the theme of ‘**Nutrition at Low-Cost: Know, Find Alternatives, Grow and Share**’ with an emphasis on maintaining individual and community nutrition during the prevailing economic crisis. This is aligned with both plans prepared for the crisis situation; Emergency Nutrition Plan (ENP) 2022-2024 prepared by the Ministry of Health and the National Short-Term Programme (NSTP) on food security and nutrition. The main objective of Nutrition Month is to focus on maintaining the optimal nutrition status at low cost by shifting into the consumption of locally available, less expensive foods including ‘not frequently utilized’ nutritious food items, engaging in home gardening and sharing food items with others including vulnerable population.

Existing food inflation leads to compromised nutrition with reduced calories, protein and micronutrient intake, which could have lasting impacts, especially on the cognitive development of young children.

A robust multi-sectoral approach with the collaboration of all relevant stakeholders is essential to overcome the nutritional vulnerability due to the current ongoing economic crisis. Therefore, during National Nutrition Month in 2022, the following key action areas have been identified to safeguard all Sri Lankan people from malnutrition and its complications.

The four key action areas are;

1. Know

- Individual nutritional status
- Locally available low-cost nutritious food
- Economical ways of preparation of meals
- Cash management for nutrition security

2. Find Alternatives

- Low-cost alternatives for nutritious food
- 'Not frequently utilized foods' in the relevant geographic areas
- For mitigating household/ community food waste

3. Grow

- Home gardening to ensure micronutrient security
- Adapt under-utilized space and utensils for home gardening maximally
- Establish small backyard poultry at the household level
- Promote aquaculture (freshwater fish) and livestock management wherever suitable

4. Share

- Share the food you have in excess for a variety
- Share cooked food with the vulnerable through the community kitchen
- Promote 'Foster Scheme' to support the needy including school meal programme
- Establish local markets to share locally grown produce

Objectives of the National Nutrition Month 2022:

1. To build awareness among the public on the importance of nutritional assessment and maintaining optimal nutritional status during the current economic crisis
2. To raise awareness among the public on locally available, 'not frequently utilized' nutritious food items as alternatives for commonly utilized food items with limited access during the current economic crisis
3. To create a supportive environment for home gardening and production of not frequently utilized, nutritious, low-cost food commodities during the current economic crisis
4. To encourage people to share and exchange food items with others at the individual level and through community platforms giving special emphasis on nutritionally vulnerable populations
5. To assess the nutritional status of most vulnerable population groups and implement specific nutrition interventions for those who suffer from malnutrition

National Level Programmes to be conducted during National Nutrition Month:

- Endorsement of the National Nutrition Month in the national nutrition council.
- A media conference will be held in the Health Promotion Bureau with the joint partnership of the Ministry of Health and other relevant stakeholders.

- An advocacy programme for health and non-health sector stakeholders on National Nutrition Month and its purposes, is planned to be held on 13th October 2022.
- Initiate dialogue towards endorsement of mandatory provision of school meal to all primary school children as a policy for the country, explore a possible mechanism for delivery, comprehensive costing of the school meal programme with possible coverage for scaling up.
- Propose a strategy for supporting pregnant mothers who are nutritionally vulnerable, with the support of development partners.
- Conduct awareness programmes for the general public through electronic and print media to achieve objectives of the National Nutrition Month in collaboration with Government and Non-Government Organizations, Development Partners, and members of Professional Organizations / Clinical Societies.
- Share experience of innovative activities among selected communities based on the theme of the National Nutrition Month.
- Develop a 'Food Alternatives' leaflet to distribute to the public to raise awareness on locally available, not frequently utilized food items and alternative cooking methods and recipes.

Provincial, District and Divisional level programmes include:

1. Obtain assistance/collaborative partnership of Provincial, and District administrative authorities in the implementation of nutrition month activities.
2. Organize and conduct programmes on the National Nutrition Month theme in collaboration with public health and primary health staff.
3. Conduct advocacy and awareness sessions with the participation of the health and non-health stakeholders in relevant institutions and organizations.
4. Assessment of the nutritional status of children under the age of five years aiming at,
 - identification of problems,
 - implementation of targeted interventions and close follow-up;
 (Refer letter FHB/CNU/07/GOSL/NM 2020-22 dated 15.09.2022 by FHB)
 - emphasizing the importance of adhering to the Infant and Young Child Feeding Guidelines focusing on providing a diversified diet rich in all nutrients at a low cost by utilizing locally available, under-utilized nutritious food items, and alternative and economical cooking methods.
5. Assessment of the nutritional status of school children and conduct awareness programmes on;
 - School Medical Inspection with special emphasis on the collection of nutrition data in two randomly selected schools in each Public Health Inspector area in the country during the month of October and share data with District, Provincial and National level
 - the importance of maintenance of the correct Body Mass Index (BMI) for age and consumption of a healthy balanced diet
6. Awareness programmes on
 - nutritional assessment, the importance of maintaining optimal nutrition during pregnancy, and common nutritional deficiencies and their adverse health effects

7. Awareness programmes in the general population including elderly on;
 - self-assessment of BMI and identifying nutritional issues
 - how to maintain desirable nutritional status at low cost by using locally available, not frequently utilized food items and alternative cooking methods during the current economic crisis
8. Programmes to provide technical guidance on home gardening and on maintaining small-scale farms at the household level when space permits with the participation of relevant technical experts in the field of agriculture and livestock, especially in under-utilized spaces and encourage food sharing/exchange
9. Programmes to promote aquaculture (freshwater fish) and consumption by raising awareness on nutritional composition and addressing palatability issues and myths with the participation of technical experts in the field of aquaculture .
10. Innovative programmes in the community to promote locally available, not frequently utilized food items and alternative cooking methods/ recipes, and to minimize food waste during the current economic crisis
11. Programmes on developing and upgrading cash management skills in view of ensuring nutrition security in the general public with special emphasis on vulnerable populations
12. Marketing programmes to expand the 'Community Kitchen' concept at the village level giving special emphasis on nutritionally vulnerable populations.
13. Supportive programmes to promote and expand the 'Foster Scheme' concept to ensure food and nutrition security among vulnerable populations.
14. Programmes to promote local food exchange and local markets to sell locally grown food items at low prices.

For further details, please contact Nutrition Division, Ministry of Health on **011-2368320/21/23** or email **nutritiondivision@health.gov.lk** or contact the following institutions under the Ministry of Health.

- Director, Family Health Bureau - 0112699332
- Head, Nutrition Department, Medical Research Institute - 0112695999
- Director, Non Communicable Disease Unit - 0112669599
- Director, Health Promotion Bureau - 0112696606
- Director, Environmental Health, Occupational Health & Food Safety Unit - 0112672004
- Director, Estate and Urban Health Unit - 0112112758


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