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SUWASIRIPAYA

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

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எனது எண்.  
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Your No.

දිනය 2017.06.16  
திகதி  
Date

Circular No. : 01-24/2017

All Provincial 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 2017**  
**“Taste Without Sugar”**

The National Nutrition Month for the year, 2017 to be held in the month of June, is based on the above mentioned theme and will be focused on the importance of adapting healthy dietary habits among all age groups.

Adopting a healthy dietary habit leads to a healthy life. Nevertheless, the prevailing but competitive life style has led our people to adapt unhealthy dietary habits including consumption of sugar sweetened beverages. Sugar sweetened beverages that are most popular among school children & the youth, contain a substantial proportion of “hidden sugar” which adds to the extra calories and gets deposited in the form of fat in the body resulting in overweight & obesity. Frequent consumption of sugar sweetened beverages also increases the risk of developing non-communicable disease such as diabetes mellitus, coronary heart disease and hypertension. Moreover, it also increases the risk of developing dental caries and other dental problems.

According to WHO guidelines, the energy obtained from sugar, per person, per day, should not exceed more than 5% of the total energy intake, which amounts to six teaspoons of sugar.

It is imperative to make available, suitable alternatives to sugar sweetened beverages without saying, that the best available alternative is clean drinking water. Naturally available drinks including water is a timely need. This can be achieved through awareness among the general public in order to bring about a desirable change in behavior and thus a favourable behavior change.

Overcoming the addiction to sugar sweetened beverages and promoting the consumption of naturally available drinks including water is a timely need. This can be achieved through awareness among the general public in order to bring about a desirable change in behavior and thus a favourable behavior change.

**Objective of the National Nutrition Month:**

1. Reduce consumption of sugar sweetened beverages among all age groups.
2. Create awareness among the general public regarding addiction to sugary beverages and the resulting detrimental health effects.
3. Promote consumption of clean drinking water and other naturally available drinks.
4. Promote a conducive environment for consumption of safe drinking water and natural drinks by strengthening multi-sectoral coordination and participatory advocacy.

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

- Inauguration ceremony to be held in Gampaha district.
- Conduct awareness programmes for the general public, in order to achieve the mentioned objectives of the National Nutrition Month, through electronic media.
- Conduct awareness programmes based on the theme 'Taste without addiction' in collaboration with Government and Non-government organizations.
- Poster competitions among school children based on the theme of the National Nutrition Month.

**Provincial, District and Regional level programmes include:**

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

- Conduct programmes with the participation of the relevant institutions, organizations and stakeholders.
- Assessment of nutritional status of children under the age of five years, identification of problems and implementation of targeted interventions and close follow up emphasizing the importance of delayed introduction and limiting of sugar sweetened food items in early childhood as a measure of primordial prevention of NCDs by establishing healthy food habits early.
- Assessment of the nutritional status of school children and conduct awareness programmes on the importance of nutrition, emphasizing the importance of an early and nutritious breakfast and on maintenance of the correct Body Mass Index (BMI).
- Increase awareness among school children and adolescents regarding detrimental effects of the unhealthy habit of consumption of sugar sweetened beverages, its addictive nature and the adverse effects of missing main meals, thus enabling them to adapt healthy dietary habits.
- The importance of reduction of consumption of sugar sweetened beverages and increase intake of clean drinking water can be further promoted through groups of children, youth and sports clubs as well as through village development societies.
- Enabling the public to assess and critically analyze the widely available advertisements on sugar sweetened beverages & food on television & other Media of communication.
- Conduct awareness programmes regarding non-communicable diseases and on adapting a healthy life style for prevention.
- Organize awareness programmes based on above mentioned theme in pre-schools, schools, institutes of higher education & technical educational institutes with the participation of the students, themselves.
- Increase awareness among school children regarding factors that contribute to obesity.
- Encourage the assessment and estimation of ones' own BMI and to tackle nutrition related problems among staff members of institutions.
- Conduct awareness programmes on "Traffic Light System" which indicates the sugar content in various beverages.
- Encourage children and the general public to assess the sugar content (red, yellow, green) during purchase of food and drink items from stores.
- Ensure adequate availability of safe drinking water for school children.

For further details & guidance, please contact Nutrition Coordination Division, Ministry of Health on 011-2368320/21/23 or [nutritioncoordination@gmail.com](mailto:nutritioncoordination@gmail.com)) & following institutions under Ministry of Health.

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- Director, Estate and Urban Health Unit - 0112672239
- Director, Non Communicable Disease Unit - 0112669599
- Director, Young, Elderly & Disabled Persons Unit - 0112674684
- Director, Nutrition Division - 0112559250
- Director, Health Education Bureau - 0112696606
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- Head, Nutrition Division, Medical Research Institute - 0112695999
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