

දුරකථන : 0112669192, 0112675011
தொலைபேசி : 0112694033, 0112675280
Telephone : 0112675449
ෆැක්ස් : 0112693866
பெக்ஸ் : 0112693869
Fax : 0112692913
විද්‍යුත් තැපෑල : postmaster@health.gov.lk
மின்னஞ்சல் முகவரி :
e-mail :
වෙබ් අඩවිය : www.health.gov.lk
இணையத்தளம் :



සුවසිරිපාය
சுவசிரிபாய
SUWASIRIPAYA

මගේ අංකය : MH/ND/C/20/03/2026
எனது இல :
My No. :
ඔබේ අංකය :
உமது இல :
Your No. :
දිනය : 25/05/2026
திகதி :
Date :

සෞඛ්‍ය හා ජනමාධ්‍ය අමාත්‍යාංශය
சுகாதார மற்றும் வெகுஜன ஊடக அமைச்சு
Ministry of Health & Mass Media

Circular No.: 01-40/2026

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 2026
“Rethink Snacks: Choose Healthy and Natural Snacks”

National Nutrition Month - 2026 will be officially launched in June under the theme “Rethink Snacks: Choose Healthy and Natural Snacks”.

Nutrition plays a fundamental role in shaping overall health, energy levels and well-being across the lifespan. Investing in proper nutrition yields immediate and long-term benefits, contributing to a healthier population. Despite notable achievements in several health indicators, key nutritional indicators have not yet reached the satisfactory levels.

Sri Lanka currently faces a triple burden of malnutrition: undernutrition, overweight and obesity, and micronutrient deficiencies. This burden reflects profound changes in dietary patterns, food environments and lifestyles. Sri Lankan dietary practices traditionally consist of three main meals per day (breakfast, lunch and dinner) often complemented by optional snacks. In the current context, socio-economic factors have driven a notable shift in food choices, with fresh and home-prepared foods increasingly being replaced by processed and ultra-processed options. Processed and ultra-processed snacks are typically energy dense, nutrient-poor and high in added sugar, salt and unhealthy fats. Due to their widespread availability, extensive marketing and convenience, ultra-processed foods and snacks have increasingly become a common feature of daily dietary patterns.

According to the Global School-based Student Health Survey conducted in 2024, a considerable proportion of school-going adolescents (13-17 years) reported frequent consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages. Daily intake of carbonated drinks was reported by 17.4%. More than one-fourth (28%) consumed sugar-sweetened beverages daily. Similarly, around 29% reported daily consumption of salty snacks and high-fat foods, while 40.9% consumed high-sugar foods each day. Notably, 70.4% consumed meals or snacks from fast food outlets or street vendors at least once during the preceding week.

Emerging evidence indicates that frequent snacking is not necessary for many healthy adults with a normal Body Mass Index (BMI) and may contribute to overweight, obesity and chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs). In contrast, regular, balanced nutrient-dense main meals with reduced eating frequency are associated with improved metabolic health and better appetite control.

Therefore, National Nutrition Month 2026 emphasizes a balanced, evidence-based approach: reducing unnecessary snacking while promoting healthy, natural choices when snacks are consumed. In line with the objectives of the National Nutrition Month 2026, the Ministry of Health and Mass Media will coordinate efforts among public and curative health staff and civil society organizations to communicate essential nutritional guidelines and foster sustainable health-promoting behaviours across communities.

National Nutrition Month 2026 Objectives:

1. To create awareness among the general public about the health risks of frequent and unhealthy snacking and promote informed food choices.
2. To empower the general public to reduce unnecessary snacking and adopt balanced, regular meal patterns.
3. To promote the consumption of natural, minimally processed and nutritious snacks when snacks are necessary, with particular emphasis on locally available affordable options.
4. To advocate for creating a conducive environment that supports access to healthy and natural snacks and restricts the marketing and availability of unhealthy snack options.

Key messages to be communicated have been identified:

1. For most healthy adults, routine snacking is not essential.
2. Consume main meals with nutritious and healthy food.
3. Frequent snacking, especially on ultra-processed foods, can contribute to metabolic harm.
4. When snacks are needed, choose natural, nutritious, healthy, minimally processed and nutrient-dense options in appropriate portions.
5. Prioritize balanced main meals and reduce unnecessary snacking.

National Level Programmes to be conducted during the National Nutrition Month 2026:

1. Conduct a media conference or seminar at the Health Promotion Bureau to officially declare the National Nutrition Month 2026.
2. The National Nutrition Month will be commemorated through a national-level event, aimed at advocating the theme among health and non-health stakeholders. The event is scheduled to be held on 22nd June 2026 in Colombo.

3. Preparation of communication materials, both digital and print, to effectively communicate the theme among the general public.
4. Organize and execute media-based public awareness initiatives—both electronic and print—to advance the goals of National Nutrition Month, in partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations, development agencies, and professional and clinical associations.
5. Organize an island-wide annual assessment of the nutrition status of children by the Family Health Bureau.

Provincial, District and Divisional level programmes include:

1. Foster collaboration with Provincial and District administrative authorities to facilitate the successful implementation of National Nutrition Month activities at all levels.
2. Plan and execute activities aligned with the National Nutrition Month theme, engaging the preventive and curative health sectors.
3. Conduct advocacy and awareness programmes with active involvement from both health and non-health stakeholders to broaden the campaign's impact.
4. Deliver theme-based awareness programmes across various settings, including pre-schools, schools, higher education institutions, technical training institutes, clinics, hospitals, workplaces.
5. Advocate for the reduction of unnecessary snacking and promote regular, balanced meals across all age groups. When snacks are consumed, promote natural, locally available, nutritious options.
6. Encourage the practice of preparing healthy, home-cooked snacks using fresh, seasonal and locally available fruits and vegetables.
7. Disseminate the key messages through the mother support groups, Happy Village and other community-based health promotion initiatives.
8. Promote delivery of key messages through school health clubs – one key message for one school health club session.
9. Work with local authorities and multiple stakeholders to improve access to affordable, nutritious and natural food options within the locality.

The annual assessment of nutrition status of children under the age of five years and school children will continue this year as follows and separate guidelines have been issued by the Family Health Bureau in this regard:

1. Activities targeting children under five years of age:

Assessment of nutritional status of children under the age of five years aiming at:

- I. Identification of growth problems.
- II. Implementation of targeted interventions and close follow up.
- III. Identification of children with severe acute malnutrition, and referral for treatment to the curative sector.
- IV. Emphasizing the importance of adhering to recommendations on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, focusing on regular, balanced meals and the strict limitation of ultra-processed foods and snacks in early childhood, as a measure of improving nutrition status, primordial prevention of NCDs and establishing healthy food habits from an early age.

2. Activities targeting school-going children:

I. Assessment of the nutritional status of school children:

- Give special attention to children with overweight and obese conditions and carry out the necessary referrals and follow-up.


II. Conduct awareness programmes on:

- The importance of maintaining a correct BMI for age and consuming a nutritious, balanced diet.
- Reducing snacking, particularly processed or ultra-processed foods, and replacing these with natural, nutritious alternatives.
- The importance of adopting healthy dietary habits in line with the Food Based Dietary Guidelines for Sri Lankans.

For further details, please refer to the National Nutrition Month Fact Sheet issued by the Nutrition Division of the Ministry of Health and Mass Media.

For any clarifications, please contact the following institutions under the Ministry of Health & Mass Media.

- Director, Nutrition - nutritioncoordination@gmail.com - 0112368320/21/23
- Director, Maternal and Child Health - 0112696508
- Director, Health Education and Publicity - 0112696606


Dr. Anil Jasinghe
Secretary
Ministry of Health and Mass Media

Dr. Anil Jasinghe
Secretary
Ministry of Health & Mass Media
"Suwasiripaya"
385, Rev. Baddegama Wimalawansa Thero Mawatha,
Colombo 10

Copies:

1. Additional Secretary (Public Health Services)
2. Director General of Health Services
3. Deputy Director General (PHS) II
4. Director, Maternal and Child Health
5. Director, Health Education and Publicity
6. Director, Nutrition
7. Director, Estate and Urban Health
8. Director, Youth, Elderly and Disability
9. Director, Non-Communicable Diseases
10. Director, Environmental Health, Occupational Health & Food Safety
11. Director, Medical Research Institute

F.Y.I.