

June - 2016

For Private circulation among members only

SLMNA



NEWSLETTER

SRI LANKA MEDICAL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION
No. 164, Maya Avenue, Colombo 06

NUTRITION DURING RAMADAN

We are blessed with the month of Ramadan in which we fast from pre-dawn to sunset. The fundamental purpose of fasting according to Quran is to attain piety. Quran also informs us that the traveler and those who are ill are exempted from fasting and Allah does not desire hardship for us. (2:185)

The fasting begins with a pre-dawn meal called sahar/suhoor. This meal should be taken around 3.30 am to 4.30 am. Consuming this meal earlier than this or abstaining from suhoor, is not welcomed. Skipping suhoor prolongs the hours of fasting, which would cause dehydration. It will also lead to over eating at Ifthar.

The pre-dawn meal should be moderate in quantity. Some people consume a large amount of meal at this time thinking that they would feel full until sunset. It is not so. What is recommended at this time is to have a meal like an early breakfast and not as a substitute for lunch.

Better to start with a full glass of water than tea or coffee. Tea and coffee have diuretic effects and losing water may cause dehydration. If you want a milk or morning milk tea it is advisable to take it before the meal.

Consuming a balanced diet is recommended. Most of us consume rice and curry in Sri Lanka. Rice should not exceed 2 tea cups of cooked rice. It would be better to consume even less. Other foods such as chappathi, Paratha, string hoppers, whole meal bread, and noodles are also consumed.(100-150 grams of main food is enough for the suhoor) Roughly the cereal should not exceed half the plate. Rest of the plate should be of vegetables, green leaves and a protein source such as meat or fish. Having some fruits is also necessary to add fibre and to prevent constipation.

Having fizzy drinks and juice or icecream/faluda which has lot of sugar is not recommended. Simple sugars digest very quickly. Therefore complex carbohydrates are preferred. Little amount of nuts such as almond, hazel nut and walnuts can be taken during suhoor. They digest slowly and can be used in the body for a longer time. Oatmeal, red rice and whole meal bread are also recommended since they are rich in fibre and helps sustain energy for long hours.

Another glass or two of water before sahar end will make you at least drink around 750ml of water. The fluid we take would help the kidney's excretory function to detoxify our body.

It is a custom of many people to sleep after fajr prayers. Sleeping soon after Sahar/Fajr is not healthy and this would make your whole day feel lethargic. Walking for few minutes would refresh

you and prevent regurgitation (Gastro esophageal reflux) as well. Ideal time for the sleep would be closer to the lunch hours. Daily activities and usual walk during work are perfectly alright while fasting and no one should avoid mild and moderate activities.

IFTHAR

Ifthar is the time of joy. It is the time at sunset to break the fast. But many of us make the mistake of consuming large amount of food during this time. It is customary to break the fast with water and 1 or 3 dates followed by a soup/Kanji. Some people prefer a tea/coffee/milk at this time. It's better to consume the soup/kanjee or tea after the maghrib prayers.

Drink plenty of water instead of consuming faludas and sweetened drinks. King coconut water is also a healthy option for us. At least 1 litre of water should be consumed between Ifthar and Sahar. The most unacceptable and unhealthy food during ifthar is the short eats, specially fried food such as samosa, chinese rolls and patties. Burgers, pizzas, French fries should also be avoided. These foods contain high amount of transfats and salt. Soft drinks should be avoided completely and sweets should be minimised as much as possible.

Many people nowadays arrange extravagant Ifthar programmes in which they serve lots of dishes and biriyani and heavy meal which are completely unhealthy. It is contradictory to the purpose of ifthar as well. Ifthar should not become afeast!

If your Ifthar has Kanjee/Soup there is no need for another meal in the form of a dinner at late night after prayers. The Kanjee contains rice, coconut milk and oil, meat or egg and sometimes vegetables as well. Therefore a regular bowl of kanjee is equivalent to a balanced nutritious dinner.

After tharaweeh prayers at night you may have a yoghurt/ curd or a fruit salad. Fruits should be consumed without adding sugar, salt or ice cream. If you want to consume a dinner make it very light and include vegetables as much as possible. Cucumbers, salad, beans, gourd group of vegetables are healthier options.

Do not forget to brush your teeth at night and after pre-dawn meal. Many forget to do this due to pure laziness.

Wish you a healthy Ramadan!

DR.M.A.Ahmad Rushdhi.

MBBS(Srilanka)

MSc(Human Nutrition)

Medical Nutrition Unit- Colombo South Teaching Hospital