

FOOD MANAGEMENT AT HOME

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The basic aim of food management at home is to provide good nutrition without being wasteful. This can be achieved if we are aware of the following areas where proper management is required.

1. BUYING FOOD:

Food constitutes the major items in the budgets of the most families. With a bit of imagination and common sense we can get maximum nutritional value from the food we buy, without the food being expensive we have to keep the following points in mind when we buy food.

- (a) One should buy food from carefully chosen vendors. From where to buy is decided by who sells fresh, unadulterated food. We should buy food, fruits and vegetables from clean shops and locations.
- (b) The quantity of food to be bought is decided by our requirements and storage facilities. Buying food beyond our requirements leads to wastage and economic loss. If we do not have proper storage facilities for the entire amount of food bought then food would be wasted.
- (c) When to buy food depends upon our requirements and family habits. It is usually best to buy fresh fruits and vegetables as and when required for consumption or cooking.
- (d) One should buy such a mix of foods which as a whole will constitute a well-balanced diet. Also, in-season fruits and vegetables usually will meet our nutritional requirements without being as expensive as out-of-season or exotic varieties.

2. STORAGE OF FOOD:

Improper storage not only means loss of food materials but also loss of nutritional value. Several fruits, vegetables, and grains can be used for a long time if they are stored properly. Thus food should be stored properly.

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3. PRE-COOKING PROCESS:

It is essential to wash fruits, vegetables, meet, cereals, and fish properly before cooking. However, too much washing has undesirable effects in certain cases. For example, washing peeled fruits and vegetables removes water-soluble vitamins like vitamin C and vitamin B from them. So such fruits and vegetables are to wash first and peel them.

Polishing of rice leads to loss of vitamin B₁. Over-refining grains and cereals leads to the loss of vitamins. A number of vitamins and minerals present in the outer covering of certain fruits and vegetables are lost when these are peeled off.

4. COOKING:

We must eat cooked food. Cooking makes fibrous food more digestible and kills micro-organisms, apart from making it tasty. Cooking however, also, has some adverse effect on the nutritive content of the food. We cook food by boiling, frying, baking, roasting or steaming. All these methods involve heating the food to some degree. This results in some loss of nutrients. If the water used for boiling is strained and thrown away, it carries with it some proteins and significant amount of minerals, salts, especially those of sodium and potassium. This method of cooking, therefore, leads to a greater loss of nutrients than other methods.

Sometimes we add substances to the food during the process of cooking that are harmful.

Although, there is adverse effect of cooking like loss of nutritive value, the benefits of cooking far outweigh them.

5. AVOIDING WASTAGE OF FOOD:

Food is wasted in families mostly because of bad management. If we are careful about how, when and in what quantity of food is bought and how it is stored, we can avoid wastage of food. A lot of food is also wasted at social ceremonies and during religious functions. Because of improper planning and management large quantity of food wasted in such occasions. Such wastage of food should be avoided at all costs.