



NUTRITION FOR **TEACHERS** AND THEIR FAMILIES

Good nutrition is the foundation of a healthy family. A healthy diet keeps the family fit, active, and disease free. It ensures good physical and mental growth for the children of the family. It gives all the family members good energy levels to go about their daily lives and achieve their goals. A good diet gives everyone a healthy ability to fight off diseases and makes sure that the family members don't fall sick often and even the elderly in the family can live an active lifestyle for as long as possible.

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So, how do we know that our diet is healthy?

Firstly, a healthy diet is a balanced and varied diet that provides all the nutrients to the body over a period of time. It includes all the vital macro and micronutrients needed by our body. This nutrition must come to us from wholesome meals that include a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, pulses, grains, millet, dairy, and meat products.

Secondly, our food is healthy when it is safe and witnessed. Safe food means food that is organically grown, free from any pesticides or preservatives, and safe for consumption. While witnessed means food that comes from a known source where you know the producers and are aware of the farming practices that are adopted in growing that food. To get safe and witnessed food you can either opt to live in rural communities that do collective farming and grow their food, or you can connect directly with local producers and educate them about organic farming processes and collaborate with them for a regular supply of organic fruits, vegetables, and grains. You can do periodic visits to make sure that your food is being grown using authentic organic practices. Nowadays, some collaborative farms give you the ease of picking up safe and witnessed food from the shelves of their store. Organo Farm Store is such a store from where you can buy safe and witnessed food off the shelves. Its products are also available online and can be home delivered too.

In short, a healthy diet is a balanced, wholesome diet where a variety of food is prepared using safe and witness ingredients. Indian cuisine has a plethora of local healthy ingredients to work with. Let's talk about the benefits of Indian super ingredients that can be easily included in our diets.



Millets:

Millet is a gluten-free versatile grain that has been an Indian staple since ancient times. It is a good source of protein, fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Millet has a low glycemic index and is good for regulating blood glucose levels. It is also good for heart health as it helps in lowering LDL cholesterol and helps us maintain healthy blood vessels. It is rich in magnesium which helps in balancing the heart rate. Millet is good for our digestive system as well. The dietary fiber in millet promotes digestion and helps in maintaining good gut health. Some variety of millet contains peroxidases that prevent the growth of colon cancer cells. Millet is even good for the skin as it contains collagen-boosting amino acids that help reduce wrinkles and prevent aging. Millet is very versatile and can be prepared in many ways. You can substitute it for rice in your dishes. You can prepare porridge, idlis, dosas, Indian bread, and many more dishes out of millet.



Jaggery

Jaggery is truly the “desi energy bar”. It gives instant energy to any tired soul. Jaggery with ginger is used to relieve people of cold in winter. Jaggery is considered good for clearing up lungs as well. Jaggery is rich in iron and folate and it helps in the prevention of anemia. It is also a good source of microminerals like manganese, selenium, and phosphorous. The trick to choosing good jaggery is to look for color. Go for dark brown color as the dark color indicates that it has not been bleached with sulfur and is chemical-free. Jaggery is more nutritious than sugar and can be substituted for it but we must not forget that it is a simple carbohydrate and must be consumed in moderation.



Desi Cow Ghee:

Pure desi ghee is the elixir of life. Everyone must consume at least one teaspoon of ghee daily. Desi cow ghee aids in digestion as it has fatty acid that helps trigger the secretion of digestive enzymes. Desi cow ghee also helps in weight loss as it boosts metabolism and helps in the burning of fat. It is rich in vitamin K2, omega fatty acids, and good cholesterol. Desi cow ghee helps in building stronger bones, regulating hormones, and improving brain and heart function. Desi cow ghee is also one ingredient that elevates the flavor of any dish to which it is added.



Pulses and legumes:

Pulses and legumes are an excellent source of proteins for the Indian vegetarian diet. If we consume a variety of pulses and legumes daily, we get the required quota of vitamins, minerals, and also all the essential amino acids to fulfill our protein requirements. Pulses are rich in protein, folate, iron, magnesium, potassium, and zinc. Soaking and sprouting pulses increase their vitamin B content. Pulses are very easy to include in our daily diet in form of dals, vadas, dosa, idly, sprouts, and fritters.



Peanuts:

The humble peanut has risen to superfood status in the last few years. It is a nutrient-rich powerhouse and can be consumed daily. Consumption of small amounts of peanuts daily has been proven to lower the risk of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Peanuts are rich in proteins, vitamins, and minerals. They are a good source of vitamin E, vitamin B complex, magnesium, copper, and potassium. It also has healthy fats, fibers, and antioxidants. You can have your peanuts boiled, roasted, or made into a spicy chaat, or add them to your upma and poha for a tasty crunch.



Spices:

The Indian spice box is our personal pharmacy in which every spice has a medicinal value. Turmeric is grandma's formula for all ailments. It is anti-inflammatory, prevents cancer and Alzheimer, and is good for heart health. Cumin is a blood purifier, fenugreek is known to slow down sugar absorption, and coriander is known to treat skin inflammation and manage high cholesterol levels. Cardamom, fennel, and ajwain are good for treating gastric problems. Daily use of these spices in our food helps us keep inflammatory diseases at bay, increase our immunity, and keep our gut healthy.



Nutrition for teachers and their families.

Teachers have a huge responsibility on their shoulders and they have the most hectic schedules. They interact with toddlers, children, and adolescents all day long. They have to keep up with the energy levels of a much younger age group. Being a teacher encompasses a myriad of responsibilities. Along with being a teacher, they have to look after their families and do their household work as well. Teachers need to be physically active and mentally alert. For this, good nutrition is very important. But, sometimes, because of their busy schedules, they go for convenience foods and the nutrition aspect of the food gets ignored. A teacher's day begins earlier than most of us. Sometimes in a hurry to go to work in the morning, they skip breakfast. At times, they have to bring work home which leaves them little or no time for food preparation, and nutrition is compromised. This may hurt their health in the long run.

Nutrition is a very important aspect of our lives. Teachers need all the energy to go about their day efficiently. It is also important for teachers to have good immunity levels because they interact daily with a big number of students from all age groups. They must consume a wide variety of food rich in all nutrients for good health. Being busy doesn't mean they have to compromise on nutrition. By careful planning and preparation, teachers can provide flavorful food and wholesome nutrition to the whole family. With a little bit of forethought and a little bit of weekend planning, it is possible to have healthy food in all your meals even with a busy schedule.



Here are a few tips and tricks for teachers to get wholesome nutrition throughout the day.

Breakfast is a must:

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day for all members of the family and requires a special mention. It is the first meal of the day and it provides you with the energy to go through the day. Skipping breakfast not only makes you lethargic but also slows down your metabolism and leads to unhealthy weight gain. So, make it a habit to always leave home with a wholesome breakfast. If the teachers have to leave early in the morning they must plan for breakfast in advance. You can do some preparation the previous evening so that morning cooking time is much reduced. You can have Idli, dosa, poha, upma, Pongal, wraps, eggs, sandwiches, stuffed paranthas, vadas, or eggs with a serving of fruit, and a wholesome glass of milk, lassi, or chaach for breakfast.

This will give you all the nutrients and the energy to kickstart your day. You can prepare the fillings and spreads for paranthas, sandwiches, and wraps the previous evening and stock them in the fridge. You can keep the batters and chutneys ready the previous evening and you can fry the pongal and upma ingredients in advance and just add water and cook in the morning. This will save you the morning rush and also ensure that you have a good breakfast. You must also stock up your fridge with simple and healthy food that you can grab and go on the days you have a time crunch. They can be fruits, energy bars, nuts, yogurt, or dry fruit mixture. Still, the thumb rule must be to have breakfast from home before leaving for work. This practice requires effort but the benefits are huge in the long run for the whole family.



Always carry fluids with you.

Teachers have a long day at school and it is good to carry a water bottle that you can refill in the school throughout the day. In summer months you must carry a small thermos flask with lemonade, coconut water, watermelon juice, buttermilk, or lassi. If you have your rejuvenating drink with you then you will not reach out for over-sweetened carbonated drinks to quench your thirst.

Have lunch on time:



These days, owing to long school hours, most schools are providing lunch in the school. It has a carefully curated menu to include nutrition and flavor for all age groups. The teachers can have school lunches or they can pack food from home. The important thing to keep in mind is to have lunch on time. With their busy schedule and classes in school, teachers may delay lunch. It is important to have lunch before 2 o'clock to prevent bloating and other gastric issues. Having food at fixed times improves your metabolism, keeps acidity at bay, and also prevents you from overeating.



Use gadgets for quick cooking:

Dinner can be light and if you are too tired after a day's work or don't have much time to prepare meals you can plan healthy one-pot meals like millet bisibele bhaat, mix veg soup with methi breadsticks, tomato soup with ragi bread, soya nugget vegetable pulao or masala khichdi. You must keep handy gadgets like a rice cooker, air fryer, instant pots, slow cookers, or soup maker to help you with quick evening cooking. These will make your work easier and you will not compromise on cooking for convenience as these gadgets will help you save time and effort.



Do weekend preparation for a fuss-free week:

Look at cooking as a cathartic and stress-buster activity and spend a few hours over the weekend to plan and prepare for the week. You can buy vegetables, plan the full menu of the week, and stock up on your ingredients and healthy snacks. You can even do partial cooking and store it in the freezer. For instance, you can make tomato onion gravy masala or ginger garlic paste for the week and store it in the freezer. This will help you prepare meals in a jiffy. You can make chutneys and spreads for the week and store them in air-tight jars. You can even make mixed veg cutlets and patties and store them in the freezer and use them in sandwiches or tacos whenever required. This weekend preparation will help you stir up a quick meal whenever required and will also help you include much-needed variety in the meals for your family.



Fill up those mason jars at home with healthy snacks:

Always have healthy snacking options available at home so that when you or other members of the family come back home after a hectic day at work or school they don't have to reach out for unhealthy snacks like chips or biscuits. You can fill your clear mason jars with healthy snacks like til laddus, peanut gud chikki, besan and til laddus, rajgira laddus, roasted bajra tikki, ariselu, ragi sev, and roasted makhanas. You can even prepare panjiri with ghee, whole wheat atta, dry fruits, and jaggery as a low-calorie alternative to laddus and store it in air-tight jars. These snacks give you instant energy and are packed with nutrients like calcium, vitamins, and minerals.



Make your dips, spreads, and chutneys in advance and store them for the week.

You can make your dhania chutney, coconut chutney, tomato chutney, or ginger chutney in advance and store it in the chiller compartment of the fridge. These chutneys are packed with vitamins and minerals and go very well with paranthas, sandwiches, or different kinds of healthy chaats, that can elevate the taste. You can even prepare hummus and pesto. These have western names but are quite Indian at heart, they are made of easy Indian ingredients like Kabuli chana, garlic, til, basil, and pistachios. These are rich in many nutrients. Preparing hummus and pesto and storing it in the fridge will help you put together a quick sandwich, wrap, or a pasta dish and save you lots of time.



Ingredients to always have in your refrigerator.

If you have a time crunch but you always yearn for a homecooked meal for your family then there are some ingredients that you must always have in your refrigerator. These will help you put together a quick meal by cutting preparation time. This will also help you add variety to your food options. Eating a wide variety of food is very important to get full nutrition from your food. Some things to always have in your refrigerator are:

- **Boiled unpeeled potatoes:** you can use them in paranthas, sandwiches, cutlets, bhel puri, papri chaats, and many other dishes loved by children and adults alike. Potato is an easy ingredient to use and it is rich in carbs and vitamin B.
- **Home-made batters:** Having various home-made batters in your fridge is a big comfort as you can churn out healthy dosas, adais, appes and idlis at a minute's notice and serve them with various chutneys for a quick meal. These batters are rich in proteins, carbohydrates, and vitamin B complex.
- **Fresh Paneer from a local reliable farm:** Paneer is the most versatile and universally loved ingredient. It is rich in calcium and protein. Having it in your fridge will help you make quick paranthas, sandwiches, or a bhurji that are both healthy and tasty.



- **Homemade gravy mixes:** Having homemade gravy mixes will cut your cooking time to almost one-fourth and help you make a variety of dishes in a short time. You can prepare tomato-onion gravy, coconut paste gravy, and other gravies and store them in your freezer compartment to be used as and when needed.
- **Greens:** You can boil and puree palak and keep it in the fridge and use it for raitas, paranthas, palak paneer, or any other dish you wish to make. Methi greens, amaranthus, and coriander can also be cleaned and stored in the fridge in airtight boxes. Having greens in your fridge will make sure you are able to feed your family healthy food even if you are short on time.
- **Eggs:** Eggs are the easiest to have in the fridge to make a quick breakfast or feed a hungry kid who has come back from a sports class. They are rich in most nutrients and can be had daily. They are a must in the fridge and are a mom's best friend in case of emergency cooking.
- **Homemade chutneys and spreads:** If you have healthy spreads like hummus and pesto in your fridge, it is easy to make a quick healthy sandwich using ragi or wholewheat bread. You can also make coriander, ginger, peanut, and tomato chutney in advance and store them in your fridge.
- Other things to always have in your refrigerator are frozen corn and peas, fruits, nuts, and healthy wholewheat, multigrain, or ragi bread. To keep your bread fresh for longer store it in freezer compartment of your fridge.

Moong dal and rajamudi rice pongal

Pongal is an ideal dish to serve for breakfast with coconut chutney. It is a combination of rice and moong dal which ensures a good protein-carb balance. It is low in fat and calories and cow ghee in Pongal provides essential omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin A to the body. Cooking it with Rajamudi rice makes it richer in nutrients and easier to digest. Rajamudi rice is a variety of red rice that is a rich source of dietary fiber, antioxidants, and iron. It is easier to digest and promotes weight loss. It is a healthier substitute for white rice.

Ingredients:

- ✓ Split moong dal-1/2 cup
- ✓ Raw rajamudi rice-1/2 cup
- ✓ Desiccated coconut-3 tbsp
- ✓ Black pepper-1/2 tsp
- ✓ Turmeric powder-1/4 tsp
- ✓ Cumin seeds-1 tsp
- ✓ Ginger grated- 1 tsp
- ✓ Green chilli-1 finely chopped
- ✓ Ghee-4 tsp
- ✓ Cashews- 2 tbsp
- ✓ Salt- to taste



Recipe:

1. Dry roast moong dal in a heavy bottom kadhai on low flame. When it changes color slightly and starts giving off an aroma, take it off the flame.
2. Wash and rinse the rice and add it to a pressure cooker along with moong dal and turmeric powder.
3. Add about 4 cups of water and pressure cook for 3 whistles and simmer for 5 minutes. After that switch off the gas and wait for the pressure to release on its own. After the pressure is released completely, open the lid and roughly mash the cooked mixture.
4. Heat a pan with ghee for seasoning and fry the broken cashews until golden brown. Remove the cashew and then fry cumin, ginger, chilies, black pepper, and desiccated coconut together for a few minutes.
5. Add this to the cooked rice and moong dal mixture. stir well and cook for a few minutes.
6. Garnish the Pongal with fried cashews.
7. Serve it with coconut chutney or sambar.

Foxtail sweet Pongal

Sweet Pongal is a heavenly dessert that is offered to gods during festival times. Cooking Pongal with millet and jaggery increases its nutritious value. Foxtail millet is gluten-free and rich in fiber, and vitamin B12. It has a low glycemic index and is good for controlling diabetes. Jaggery is a good source of iron and folate and helps in the prevention of anemia. Sweet Pongal is loved by adults and children alike and can be had for breakfast or as an after-meal dessert.

Ingredients:

- ✓ Foxtail millet-1/4 cup
- ✓ Moong dal-1/8 cup
- ✓ Jaggery powder-1/4 cup
- ✓ Cashews- 2 tbsp
- ✓ Raisins-2 tbsp
- ✓ Cardamom powder-1/4 tsp
- ✓ Edible camphor- A pinch
- ✓ Desiccated coconut-2 tbsp
- ✓ Ghee 3 tbsp

Recipe:

1. In a pan add millets and moong dal and dry roast them at the low flame with constant stirring.
2. When they change a little color and become aromatic shift them to a bowl and wash and rinse them with water.
3. Add the moong dal and millets mixture to a pressure cooker and cook it till the millets are soft. This usually takes 3 whistles and simmering for 5 minutes. Wait for the pressure to be released naturally.
4. Add one tbsp ghee to a pan and roast the cashew and raisins. After the cashews turn golden brown transfer them.
5. To the same pan add jaggery powder and ¼cup of water. Cook it on medium flame.
6. Add the cooked dal and millet when the jaggery gets dissolved and starts boiling.
7. Adjust the consistency by adding a little more water if needed.
8. Add cardamom powder, camphor powder, coconut powder, roasted cashews, and raisins.
9. Mix everything together and add the rest of the ghee, cook for a few minutes, and then switch off the gas.
10. Serve tasty sweet Pongal as a dessert.



Jowar roti with ghee

Jowar is gluten-free and rich in fiber. It has a low glycemic index and helps in controlling diabetes. It is a good source of iron, magnesium, vitamin B, potassium, and phosphorus. You can substitute wheat roti for jowar roti for good health. Jowar roti tastes good when eaten with ghee. They can be served with a variety of local curry dishes.

Jowar roti is a little tricky to make but with practice, you can perfect the technique. Here is how you can make jowar roti.

Ingredients:

- ✓ Jowar atta- 1 cup
- ✓ Salt- 1/4 tsp
- ✓ Hot water- 3/4 cup
- ✓ Ghee



Recipe:

1. Take one cup of jowar flour in a bowl. Add salt to it. Then add about 1/4 cup of hot water to it.
2. With a spoon mix the water and the jowar flour.
3. Add the remaining 1/4 cup of water and again mix well.
4. After some time when the dough has cooled enough to handle, knead it with your hands. Knead it very well and if you feel it is a little sticky then add a little bit more flour to it.
5. Cover and keep it aside, till it cools to room temperature.
6. Make small to medium-sized balls of dough.
7. Take a ball of dough and flatten it slightly and place it on a dusted rolling board and pat and flatten it with your hand. Sprinkle more flour on top of it if required.
8. With a spatula gently lift the roti and place it on a hot tava or a girdle.
9. Spread some water over the jowar roti with your fingers.
10. When the base looks a little cooked then turn the roti and let the watered side cook till you see brown spots.
11. Then carefully lift the roti with a pair of tongs and place it directly on the flame. The roti will begin to puff up. Turn it and cook the other side of roti on the flame.
12. Remove and put it in the roti basket and apply a generous amount of ghee on one side.
13. Serve it hot or warm with chutney, podi, or curry dishes.

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