

Level 1/2 Hospitality and Catering: Unit 2-2.1.1 - Understanding the importance of nutrition



The importance of nutrition

Listed below are the macro-nutrients and micro-nutrients. You need to know their function in the body and know examples of food items for each. You need to know why they are needed in the diet and why there is a need for a balanced/varied diet.

Macro-nutrients

Carbohydrates - Carbohydrates are mainly used in the body for energy. There are two types of carbohydrates which are:

- **Starch** - Examples include bread, pasta, rice, potatoes and cereals.
- **Sugar** - Examples include sweets, cakes, biscuits & fizzy drinks.

Fat - This is needed to insulate the body, for energy, to protect bones and arteries from physical damage and provides fat soluble vitamins. There are two main types of fat which are:

- **Saturated fat** - Examples include butter, lard, meat and cheese.
- **Unsaturated fat** - Examples include avocados, plant oils such as sunflower oil, seeds and oily fish.

Protein - Protein is mainly used for growth and repair in the body and cell maintenance. There are two types of protein which are:

- **High biological value (HBV) protein** - Includes meat, fish, poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, soya and quinoa.
- **Low biological value (LBV) protein** - Includes cereals, nuts, seeds and pulses.

Micro-nutrients

Vitamins

- **Fat soluble vitamin A** - Main functions include keeping the skin healthy, helps vision in weak light and helps children grow. Examples include leafy vegetables, eggs, oily fish and orange/yellow fruits.
- **Fat soluble vitamin D** - The main function of this micro-nutrient is to help the body absorb calcium during digestion. Examples include eggs, oily fish, fortified cereals and margarine.
- **Water soluble vitamin B group** - Helps absorb minerals in the body, release energy from nutrients and helps to create red blood cells. Examples include wholegrain foods, milk and eggs.
- **Water soluble vitamin C** - Helps absorb iron in the body during digestion, supports the immune system and helps support connective tissue in the body which bind cells in the body together. Examples include citrus fruits, kiwi fruit, cabbage, broccoli, potatoes and liver.

Minerals

- **Calcium** - Needed for strengthening teeth and bones. Examples include dairy products, soya and green leafy vegetables.
- **Iron** - To make haemoglobin in red blood cells to carry oxygen around the body. Examples include nuts, beans, red meat and green leafy vegetables.
- **Sodium** - Controls how much water is in the body and helps with the function of nerves and muscles. Examples include salt, processed foods and cured meats.
- **Potassium** - Helps the heart muscle to work correctly and regulates the balance of fluid in the body. Examples include bananas, broccoli, parsnips, beans, nuts and fish.
- **Magnesium** - Helps convert food into energy. Examples include wholemeal bread, nuts and spinach.
- **Dietary fibre (NSP)** - Helps digestion and prevents constipation. Examples include wholegrain foods (wholemeal pasta, bread and cereals), brown rice, lentils, beans and pulses.
- **Water** - Helps control temperature of the body, helps get rid of waste products from the body and prevents dehydration. Foods that contain water naturally include fruits and vegetables, milk and eggs.