



* HEALTHY FOOD OUTLETS

Through healthy food outlets you can buy ready to eat food items which are healthy and nutritious. These outlets can be considered as a better place for family gathering. Therefore establishing and making available of these healthy and nutritious food outlets is one of the best strategies to improve the food consumption and thereby nutritional status of the nations.

Most of the healthy food outlets promote traditional food items and recipes. But all the traditional foods and recipes are not healthy. You need to be aware that high carbohydrate foods such as string hoppers, roties, hoppers, and even rice in large quantities are not healthy. Fatty foods such as wades, cutlets, patties, and traditional sweets like oil cakes, levariya, peni walalu etc should not be consumed regularly.

Therefore, the sellers should be concerned about preparing and selling of more healthy and nutritious food items. Consumers should be careful to select the healthy foods out of what is available in the food outlet, such as vegetables, salads, fruits, green leaves, fish, milk and eggs



* STREET MARKET (POLA)

Street market or pola is unique in Sri Lanka, where growers gather weekly to sell their produce directly to the public. Nowadays, pola has been commercialized and the foods are not sold by the farmers. But still you can identify some genuine farmers or families who are selling their items.

- Agro tourism
- Eco tourism
- Value addition/preservation

Agro-eco tourism

Sri Lanka has a prod history of agriculture from the ancient Kings. The country is scattered with gigantic reservoirs and major irrigation schemes that have been used for agricultural purposes through the centuries. Converting traditional farms to tourist attractions will help the country as well as the farmers to earn an extra income as the tourists love to see how farmers practice their agriculture in their own lands. Tour agents arrange visits to farms where the visitors can watch paddy being cultivated or harvested to the chanting of customary harvest songs, see the plant and seed nurseries; traditional vegetable farms, orchards and dairies. Arrangements can be made for the tourists to trek through acres of cultivation, watch the people at work and try their hands at some of the tasks, climb up to the tree house that's used as a watch tower and learn how the produce is processed and packed. They like to visit to a home garden to observe organic cultivation and production of compost fertilizer, enjoy a wholesome local meal at farmer's house and end the day be entertained with a cup of tea or herbal drink at the farmland. Farmer organizations can work with Department of Agriculture, Tourist Board and private tour agencies to establish this kind of new venture for the benefits of the farmers.

Value addition

There is a growing interest among consumers in traditional products that are closely linked to a specific place of origin. The end-customers are showing a greater tendency to purchase food or agro-industrial products that are deeply-rooted in the various popular cultures, even if this means paying higher prices. Village level farmer organizations can organize training sessions on food processing and preservation for farmer women with the help of government ministries and non-governmental organizations and make the products available at local shops or farmhouse.



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



HEALTHY FOOD PROMOTION



KNOW YOURSELF WHAT IS NUTRITIOUS THEN SELL, PURCHASE AND EAT!

Promotion of healthy and nutritious foods is very essential to improve the dietary pattern of people. Healthy food can be promoted through the awareness and making available of healthy/ nutritious foods outlets.

❖ INCREASING CONSUMER AWARENESS

You should know what are nutritious foods and what not. There are various advertisements to promote junk foods which are unhealthy but very few to promote nutritious foods. You should be able to select what you need and what is good to you and your family.

You can follow several steps in selecting packed foods. Using front of pack labels is really useful when you want to quickly compare different food products. The nutrition facts label/ nutrition information panel and traffic light labeling give you some information about the nutritional quality of the foods.

Look for and compare total fat, saturated fat, trans fats, sugars and salt in the label and try to select the foods containing low amount of these.

The nutrition facts label/ nutrition information panel is a label shows what nutrients are available in the foods in which quantities. You can see what nutrients are high and what are in low quantities in the particular food item.

In the traffic light labeling, a combination of colour coding (traffic lights) is used to show, at a glance, whether a product is high (red), medium (amber) or low (green) in fat, salt and sugars. This can help you make comparisons between foods to allow you to make a healthier choice.



❖ MAKING AVAILABLE OF HEALTHY/ NUTRITIOUS FOODS OUTLETS.

One of the reasons for you to select more unhealthy foods may be low availability of nutritious foods and much more availability of unhealthy foods. Establishing and improving healthy/nutritious food outlets can influence the consumers to make healthy food choices.

Always try to eat home cooked food. Eat restaurant food, takeaways and ready to eat foods occasionally and try to select relatively healthy options in smaller portions. Also keep it in your mind that low fat but high carbohydrate foods (rice and wheat flour products) are also bad for our health.

❖ FARMERS MARKETS

Farmers' markets are one of the oldest forms of direct marketing by small farmers. For many of people, farmers markets offer a hope for a healthy future. The raw foods which are grown in the farmlands specially, fruits, vegetables, pulses, yams, cereals and some animal foods such as fish, egg and milk.

Farmers markets are important for many reasons. The food at a farmers' market may be more often locally sourced and fresher. Farmers markets help make both farming and consumption profitable. You can buy the food items cheaper compares to retail shops, super markets and other outlets since it cut down the involvement of middlemen. Interestingly, farmers markets reconnect communities to their food system creating a healthy environment for consumers and farmers. A farmers market can be an important social event in the life of a community. It is a meeting place that encourages friendly interactions. Food shopping is a weekly event which increases repeated social interactions. They create an opportunity where farmers can simultaneously sell fresh, local food and serve as food educators, revitalizing the way consumers shop and eat. Farmers markets support emotional health by creating a cheerful space where people come together for laughter, fellowship, food, and fun.



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Mainstreaming Nutrition in the Agriculture Sector in Sri Lanka



NUTRITION SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA

