



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
**Ministry of Health**



# Presidential Initiative

**On Healthy Eating  
& Healthy Lifestyle**

# Preface

The health of the Ugandan population is central to the social economic transformation of the country. The poor health status of our people will undermine the economic benefits of attaining middle income status by 2020.

Over the years, whenever someone would talk about malnutrition, all attention would be drawn to undernutrition especially among children. Majority of the efforts in promoting nutrition have been focused on preventing under nutrition.

To date, the rates of undernutrition among children have significantly reduced which is indicative of a big achievement in promoting child health. We are however noticing an increasing trend of obesity/overweight and associated noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) among our population especially the adults; for instance, about 2 in 10 adults in Uganda are overweight or obese and 1 in 4 has hypertension. This is affecting progress in economic development and resulting into the decline of human productivity for our country. These diseases are mainly due to unhealthy lifestyles and eating habits that have been adopted and carried forward over the years.

If we strive to create behaviour change in our people, we can overcome and reduce some of these diseases which are ending their lives. I am therefore launching this initiative as a tool to help community health workers and leaders to educate our community on healthy eating and living healthy lifestyles. Implementation of this initiative will require a multi-sectoral response by all Ugandans. I therefore call upon health workers, political, cultural and religious leaders to commit to and embrace this document. I also call upon all sectors; public, private, civil society and the media to spread the message on healthy eating and healthy lifestyle.

For God and My Country



Yoweri K. Museveni  
**President of the Republic of Uganda**

# Background

In Uganda, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are a public health problem. Although once considered the diseases of the affluent, it is noticeable that NCDs affect even those with low social economic status. The major shift in individuals' health behaviours and lifestyles especially due to the rapid urbanisation, of once rural communities, has escalated the disease burden. In the current transition, a more convenient lifestyle characterised by use of motorised transport and consumption of fast foods has taken over the past behaviours which could encourage physical activity and consumption of healthy foods.

Although the current mortality due to the four major NCDs (cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes) stands at 27%, this is expected to rise in next decade if nothing is done. The risk factors for NCDs such as excessive alcohol consumption, tobacco use, physical inactivity and consumption of unhealthy diets are also currently increasing in our population. Moreover, a quarter of our adult population is hypertensive and nearly a quarter is overweight/ obese. Consequences from NCDs have developmental and economic implication; due to the chronic nature of these conditions.

## **The Purpose of this Initiative is to:**

- 1.** Promote healthy eating and lifestyle practices in households and communities.
- 2.** Raise public awareness about malnutrition and its consequences.
- 3.** Advocate for engagement and involvement of public and private sectors, civil society and other stakeholders in promoting healthy diets and lifestyles

## The burden of Noncommunicable diseases in Uganda

**1** in every **4** adults has high blood pressure.

**3** among **4** of those with high blood pressure don't know they have it.

**4,690** people died of diabetes in 2016.

**2** in **100** Ugandan adults have diabetes. **[Source: Uganda NCD Survey, 2014]**

**21,829** people died of cancer in 2018 with more cases being registered to date.

**32, 617** new cancer cases occurred in 2018. **[Source: Globocan 2018]**

## The burden of risk behaviours that cause Noncommunicable diseases

**8** in **100** adults in urban areas and **4 in 100** adults in rural areas don't exercise enough.

**30** in **100** adults drink alcohol and **10%** of these are heavy drinkers.

**12** in **100** adults use tobacco and its products.

**90** in **100** adults eat less than the required amounts of fruits and vegetables.

## Call for action

To end all forms of malnutrition (under and over nutrition) by 2030, there's need to build on the successes achieved so far and promote healthy eating and lifestyles by doing the following:

1

### **Sensitize communities on healthy eating**

- Eat a variety of foods from different food groups like energy giving foods, body building foods, protective foods and water.
- Breastfeed children for the first two years of life.

2

### **Sensitize communities on healthy lifestyle.**

- Encourage active participation in physical activity.
- Limit alcohol intake and avoid drug abuse.
- Regular medical checkups and seek early treatment.
- Reduce stress.



## What is a healthy diet and why do we need it?

A healthy diet is eating a variety of foods in their right quantities according to age, gender and level of physical activity.

A healthy diet helps to protect against malnutrition in all its forms, as well as noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer.



# Dietary Approaches for a Healthy Life

## Action 1:

## Eat A Variety of Healthy Foods

### Key Messages

1. Ensure you eat foods from different food groups at every meal and throughout the day i.e. energy giving foods, protective foods and body building foods.

**Note:** Select a variety of foods within each food group.

2. Eat enough quantities of fruits and vegetables and try to vary between the different colours. Combine green, red, orange and purple vegetables/fruits whenever possible. These provide several minerals and vitamins.



# Choose Whole Grains And Cereals

## Key Messages

1. Whole grains are excellent sources of fiber and nutrients essential for;
  - Improving digestion and smooth bowel movement thus reducing the risk of colon and rectal cancer.
  - Weight control
  - Healthy blood vessels
2. Look out for cereals that have been fortified with additional vitamins and minerals; and these are available in shops, markets and supermarket.
3. Avoid eating cereals and nuts with molds.





## Action 3:

# Eat plenty of Fruits & Vegetables Daily

## Key Messages

Fruits and vegetables are good sources of minerals, vitamins and fibre and are important for;

- Improving immunity to prevent diseases
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Good bowel movement that prevents certain stomach cancers

1. Eat a variety of fresh or cooked vegetables in your meals daily
2. Avoid over cooking vegetables to avoid loss of food value.
3. Ensure you wash your vegetables thoroughly

### Eat a variety of fruits daily.

Vary between the different colors. Combine green, red, orange and purple fruits.



## Action 4:

# Eat Enough Protein Foods Daily

## Key Messages

Proteins are important for growth, development and maintaining a healthy body.

Protein can be obtained from both plant and animal sources



## Action 5:

# Limit Your Daily Intake of Fats/Oils, Sugar and Salt

## Key Messages

1. Excess intake of fats/oils and sugar increases the risk of overweight/obesity.
2. Excess intake of salt increases the risk of high blood pressure.
3. Use more of vegetable oils like sunflower and less of solid fats like ghee and margarine.
4. Reduce intake of processed drinks like soda and sugar added drinks.
5. Limit intake of sweets, cakes, biscuits and sugary pastries and increase healthy snacks such as eggs, fruits and roasted nuts
6. Read food labels to help you make healthy choices
7. Always eat iodized salt

## Action 6:

# Observe good Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Practices(WASH)

## Key Messages

1. Drink safe water (Boiled, or treated)
2. Always wash hands with soap and flowing water before handling food.
3. Wash all fruits and vegetables with clean water before preparing and eating.
4. Use clean utensils for preparing, serving and keeping food.
5. Always keep homes, their surroundings and areas where food is prepared clean.



# Lifestyle Approaches for a Healthy Life

What is a Healthy Lifestyle and Why should you live a Healthy Lifestyle



**A healthy lifestyle is a way of living that makes one fit, energetic and lowers the risk of being ill or dying early.**

**A healthy lifestyle helps you to:**

- Reduce your risk of getting diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer etc.
- Enjoy a healthy life with much freedom and energy to do your daily activities.
- Save money that you would have spent on treating diseases.
- Be more productive to your family and the country.



## Action 1:

# Engage in Adequate Physical Activities Daily

## Key Messages

### Physical activity;

- Improves blood circulation.
- Stimulates appetite
- Improves mood
- Maintains muscles
- Makes you alert and active



Adults should engage in 30mins of moderate intense physical activity per day.  
Children and adolescent should engage in 60mins of moderate intense physical activity per day.

### Examples of moderate intense physical activities include:

Brisk walking, Climbing stairs, Domestic work, Gardening, Jogging, Aerobics, cycling and sports.



# Quit Tobacco use, Stop substance abuse & Reduce Alcohol Consumption

## Key Messages

- 1.** Tobacco use is a leading cause of cancer especially lung cancer
- 2.** Excessive alcohol is a main risk factor for liver disease and several types of cancers, road accidents and domestic violence.
- 3.** Do not use tobacco in any form ie; Cigarette smoking, tobacco sniffing, chewing and pipe smoking.



## Action 3 :

# Go for Regular Medical Check-up

## Key Messages

### Prevention is better than cure

Regular medical check-up is crucial for the benefit of general wellbeing and overall health as it helps to detect any upcoming health issues that can be diagnosed and treated properly.

High blood pressure for example is a silent killer and usually has no warning signs, leading to life threatening conditions like heart attack and/ stroke.

It is therefore important to go for regular medical check-up every 6 months for:

- Blood pressure,
- Blood sugar levels
- Cholesterol levels
- Body Mass Index
- Cancers like, breast, prostate, cervical
- HIV/AIDS/TB



# Manage Stress

## Key Messages

Stress refers to a situation that causes discomfort and distress for a person. It can cause health problems such as heart disease, hypertension, anxiety and depression, digestive problems etc.

### How do we prevent stress?

- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals with plenty of fruits and vegetables as vitamins help to reduce stress.
- Exercise regularly; your body can fight stress better when physically fit.
- Avoid use of alcohol, drugs, or compulsive behaviors to reduce stress.
- Get enough rest and sleep. Your body needs time to recover from stressful events.
- Seek out social support including counseling.
- Spend enough time with those you enjoy.





# KEY NUTRITION REQUIREMENTS PER LIFE STAGE

## Infants and Young Children:

### Children 0-6 months

**Types of foods:**

Breast milk only

**Frequency:**

Breastfeed every **2-3** hours OR **8-12** times a day or more as needed in the first 6 months.


















### Children 6-23 months

**Types of foods:** Breast milk and a variety of foods from different food groups

**These foods include:** Thick enriched porridges such as maize, wheat, soya, rice, millet, sorghum enriched with milk, simsim/groundnut paste or milk.



Examples of Enriched porridges	Children 6-11 months	Children 12-23 months
<p>Millet Porridge with Milk</p> 	 <p>Quarter a cup</p>  <p>Half a cup</p>	 <p>Three quarters a cup</p>
<p>Millet Porridge with Egg</p> 	<p>Feed the child a quarter to a half a cup of enriched porridge at least 3 - 4 times a day, together with continued breastfeeding.</p>	<p>Feed the child three quarters a cup of enriched porridge at least 3 - 4 times a day, together with continued breastfeeding.</p>
<p>Soya Porridge with Milk</p> 		
<p>Millet Porridge with Mukene</p> 		

Examples of Mashed foods	Children 6-11 months	Children 12-23 months		
<p><b>Beans and Doodo</b></p> 	 <p><b>2-3 TABLE SPOONS PER FEED 3-4 TIMES A DAY</b></p> <p>Feed the child 2-3 table spoons of mashed foods per feed increasing gradually 125 mls (half a NICE cup) 3-4 times a day</p> 	 <p><b>6-7 TABLE SPOONS PER FEED 3-4 TIMES A DAY</b></p> <p>Feed the child 6-7 table spoons of mashed foods per feed 3-4 times a day</p>		
<p><b>Sweet Potato with Beans, Ground nuts and Doodo</b></p> 				
<p><b>Sweet Potato with Ground nuts , Mukene and Doodo</b></p> 				
<p><b>Sweet Potato, Beans, Mukene and Doodo</b></p> 				
<p><b>Ground nuts with Beans and Doodo</b></p> 				

## Children 2 -5 years (pre-school)

### Types of foods:

A variety of foods from the different food groups from the family foods

### Frequency:

3 meals with a variety of foods, including 2-3 snacks between meals including milk

Water: 1 Litre per day(2 mugs)

Meals include: Breakfast, Snack, Lunch, Snack, Supper

### Amounts of foods:

3 balanced meals, with 2-3 additional snacks

### Hygiene:

Foods to these children should be hygienically prepared with less handling to avoid contamination which can cause diarrhoea and illness

### Calorie requirements:

1000 -1500 Kcal per day depending on activity

## Infants born to HIV positive mothers

An HIV positive mother can successfully breastfeed her infant. Feed an HIV exposed infant on breast milk for the first 6 months of life.

Introduce the infant to a variety of nutritious locally available foods at 6 months such as enriched cereal porridges.

Stop breastfeeding at 1 year

Ensure adherence to Anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs

### Sick Children:

All sick children, feed on small, frequent meal of soft, constancy and enriched foods of high fat and mineral content.

Give one extra snack and meal at the onset of sickness and 3 extra meals (or 2 extra meals and snack)

Children who are sick should be breastfed more frequently



## Children 6 -10 years (school going children)

### **Types of foods:**

A variety of foods from the different food groups as part of the family foods

### **Frequency:**

3 meals with a variety of foods, 2-3 snacks between meals including milk

Breakfast, Snack, Lunch, Snack, Supper

Amounts of foods: 3 balanced meals, with 2-3 additional snacks

Water: 1.5 Litres per day(3 mugs)

### **Hygiene:**

Foods to these children should be hygienically prepared with less handling to avoid contamination which can cause diarrhoea and illness

### **Calorie requirements:**

1600 -2600 Kcal per day depending on activity

## Adolescents (10-19 years)

Nutrition requirements for adolescents increase due to rapid increase in body size and maturation. Adolescents have the highest energy and protein requirements of any age group. Males have higher energy requirements since they experience greater increases in height, weight and lean body mass than females

Watch out for adolescents with signs of common eating disorders like refusal to eat, concerns about body shapes and weight, over-eating, vomiting after eating, and link them for counselling and support.

Investing in healthy eating and lifestyles during adolescence helps this group to remain healthy and productive throughout their life time.

### **Types of food**

- Eat a variety of foods from at least four food groups (include several servings of dairy products, green leafy vegetables, foods rich in calcium)
- Avoid foods that are high in sugars, salts, and fat to reduce exposure to overweight, obesity, tooth decay, diabetes and heart diseases.
- Eat iron rich foods to cater for loss of blood during menstruation (females), increased muscle mass development (males)
- Eat a variety of calcium-rich foods and beverages for example milk and milk products, amaranth seeds, etc.

### **Frequency**

- Eat at least five times in a day (three main meals, and two nutritious snacks)
- Water: 2 litres for boys (4 mugs) and 1.6litres for girls (3 mugs)

### **Calorie requirements:**

Adolescent girls: 1600 -2200 Kcal per day depending on activity

Adolescent boys: 2500 -3000 Kcal per day depending on activity



## **Pregnant and lactating women:**

**Pregnant women:**

### **Types of foods:**

A variety of foods from the different food groups

### **Frequency:**

3 meals with a variety of foods, 2-3 snacks between meals

Eat 2 extra meals a day to maintain your health and that of your baby

Take iron and folic acid tablets as advised by the health worker.

Drink plenty of water (atleast 2litres) for sufficient breast milk production.

Take atleast 7-10 hours of rest during day and night.

### **Calorie requirements:**

1800 -2400 Kcal per day depending on activity and trimester.

## Lactating women:

### Types of foods:

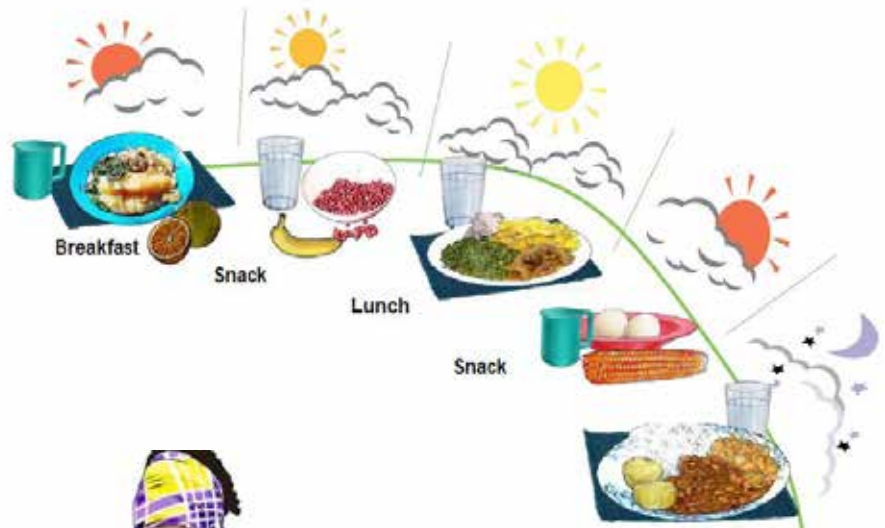
A variety of foods from the different food groups

### Frequency:

3 meals with a variety of foods,  
2-3 snacks between meals.  
Eat 2 extra meals a day in  
addition to the 3 usual meals

### Calorie requirements:

2000-2500 Kcal per day



## Adults:

### Types of food:

Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, fat free or low-fat dairy products

Include grains, beans, seeds, nuts, and vegetable oils

Eat lean meat and fish

Eat reduced salt, red meat and sugary drinks.

Limit alcoholic beverages

### Frequency and Amount:

3 meals with a variety of foods, 2-3 snacks between meals

Vegetables: 2-3 ladles of raw vegetables (128-350g) or 3-4 ladles of cooked vegetables (360 -450g) per day

Grains: About 2-3 nice cups of cooked grains (480-640g). 3 parts of this should be whole grain. Aim to have all your grain choices whole grain

Lean Meat and Fish: Eat not more than 170g per day of cooked lean meat/ poultry.

Seeds and nuts: 3 table spoons of nuts and seeds (45g)

Legumes: 3-4 ladles of cooked legumes (360-450g) per day.

Fats and oils: not more than 2-3 table spoons per day

Sweets and sugar: Less than 5 table spoons per day.

Water: 2 Litres per day(4mugs) for men: 1.6 Ltrs per day for women (3mugs)

### Calorie requirements for Adults:

#### Men:

**Sedentary:** 2200Kcal

Moderately Active: 2400-2800Kcal

Active: 3000 Kcal

#### Women

Sedentary: 1800Kcal

Moderately Active: 2000-2200Kcal

Active: 2400Kcal

#### Sedentary Individuals:

Office workers, drivers and shop attendants.

#### Active Individuals:

Soldiers, athletes, farmers, builders

**Moderately active and active adults** should include more energy dense foods such as grains (posho, kalo, rice), tubers (potatoes, cassava, yams) in their diets to meet their energy needs



**Eat 3-4 ladles of cooked vegetables per day**



**Eat 3-4 ladles of cooked legumes per day**



**Eat 3 table spoons of nuts per day**



# M U S E V E N I

**Maintain a healthy weight**

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**Uphold a Healthy lifestyle**

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**Seek regular medical checkup**

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**Eat healthy**

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**Variety of local available foods**

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**Exercise regularly**

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**No smoking or Alcohol & drug Abuse**

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**Invest in your health**

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A healthy weight is a BMI between 18kgs and 25kgs per metre sq.



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For more information call our Toll Free Line:

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