



ABSTRACT

Food and nutrition intake recommendation during COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines

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Nutrition Battling on Pandemic COVID-19: How to Survive

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Today, the world faces a major public health crisis due to the outbreak of coronavirus disease. In the Philippines, the disease has infected more than 200,000 individuals with 3,234 (28 August 2020) total mortality.

COVID 19 patients are suffering from diarrhea and fever. During this period there is loss of appetite, malabsorption of nutrients, poor supply of nutrients to maintain integrity of the cells, weight loss, worsened mucosal damage, and urinary nitrogen loss, all of which lead to further deterioration of the immune response. The fever which is common in COVID – 19 infected individuals increases both energy and micronutrient requirements. During this period there is a need to administer therapeutic diet to compensate the nutrient losses to prevent further deterioration of the immune system. Medical nutritionals/oral feeding shall be encouraged for early intestinal nutrition that can provide nutritional support, nourish the intestines, improve intestinal mucosal barrier and intestinal immunity, and maintain intestinal micro-ecology.

As there is no registered medicine or vaccine against COVID-19, our immune system is the best defense. The immune system supports our body's natural ability to defend against pathogens. Existing evidence highlights that a nutrient – dense diet along with regular physical activity and adequate sleep could boost the immune system. Poorly nourished individuals are at greater risk of acquiring bacterial, viral, and other infections. One way to eat healthy is to choose a wide variety of foods. Variety matters because no single food has all the nutrients to support body's normal functioning. A healthy meal plan for a Filipino adult is one that is composed of the following macronutrient distribution ranges: Protein 10-15%, Fat 15-30% and Carbohydrates 55-75% (PDRI, 2015). Inclusion of food items that are rich in vitamins and minerals such as Vitamins C, Vitamin A, β -carotene, Vitamin D, B-Vitamins, Folate, Zinc, bioflavonoids, probiotics, prebiotics and resveratrol in meal planning should be taken into consideration. Moreover, adding in the meal food items with known anti-inflammatory effects such as ginger, turmeric, garlic, bell peppers, and onions might also be beneficial (DOH Interim Guidelines, 2020). Researches on virgin coconut oil as adjunct supplement to COVID – 19 because of its anti-viral properties are also underway. The visual tool “*Pinggang Pinoy*” developed by the Department of Science and Technology – Food and Nutrition and Research Institute is a food plate model which conveys the right food groups and proportions on a per-meal basis to help Filipinos of different age groups adapt healthy eating habits at meal times.

In these unprecedented times, it is beneficial to consult a Registered Nutritionist-Dietitian (RND) who can assist in the development of an individualized, safe, and realistic eating plan and carry-out properly the dietary guidelines for COVID – 19.



ABSTRACT

In summary, the key to sustaining a good immune system is to consume nutrient-dense food at the right quantity to prevent nutritional deficiencies. Nourishing our body play a vital role to prevent, fight, and recover from infections.

Keywords: COVID-19, nutrient-dense foods, nutrient intake

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