



सत्यमेव जयते
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Government of India



4

MANTRAS

to make adolescents solid and smart

4 MANTRAS

to make adolescents solid and smart

India is home to the largest adolescent population in the world with nearly 253 million people between the age of 10–19 years.



Adolescence is the second fastest growing period of life after early childhood. During these crucial years, girls and boys experience maximum physical, mental, psychological and behavioral changes.

It is important to be healthy, well-nourished, and fit during adolescence. Healthy growth, development and well-being of this youthful human resource holds the promise and potential for a strong and healthy India.

WHAT are the 4 Mantras for adolescents to be solid and smart?

To stay healthy, well-nourished and full of energy during adolescence:

- Eat healthy and iron-rich balanced diet
- Prevent anemia and iron-deficiency
- Stay healthy by preventing worm infestation
- Maintain personal hygiene and sanitation

Why are the 4 Mantras important?

Adolescence is a period of accelerated growth and the nutritional needs of boys and girls increase sharply during this period.

The 4 Mantras will provide adolescents with vital nourishment that is a basic prerequisite to sustain life. During this important phase of their lives, adolescents can utilize the 4 Mantras to stay healthy, energetic, disease-free and be able to joyfully carry out their daily activities at school, home and in their communities.



The goal of 4 Mantras

The 4 Mantras for a Healthy India asks every adolescent to:

- Consume a balanced Tricolor Thaali diet every day with adequate intake of energy, protein, minerals and vitamins. The tricolour thaali consists of food items representing the colours in the Indian National Flag – Orange, White and Green.
- Take one Iron Folic Acid tablet (blue tablet) every week from your school or Anganwadi center.
- Take one deworming tablet every six months and avoid infections such as water-borne diseases, malaria and vaccine preventable diseases.
- Exercise daily and maintain healthy habits, personal hygiene and sanitation in surroundings.



Be Solid and Smart. Eat healthy and balanced diet

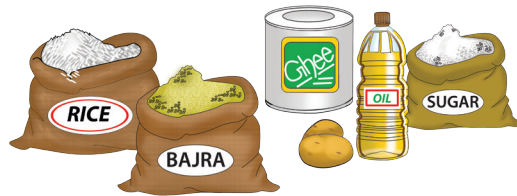
WHAT 
is a balanced diet?

A balanced diet contains all the nutrients through various food groups necessary to maintain good health. Adolescents should consume a balanced diet every day that will provide energy, help body growth and provide protection from diseases.



Energy giving foods
(helps in being
energetic and active)

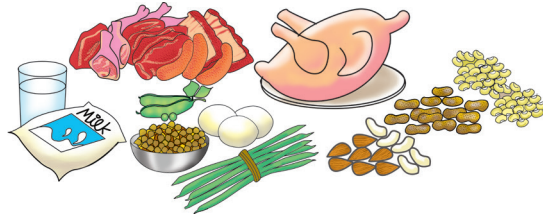
Rice, wheat, millets such as jowar and bajra,
potato, jaggery, sugar, oil, ghee etc.



Body building foods
(help body growth and
development in girls
and boys)

Dals/pulses such as lentils and legumes, peas,
horse gram, soyabean, groundnuts, beans, milk,
eggs, meat, etc.

Sprouted legumes increase vitamin C content.



Protective foods (help
to fight infection and
illness)

Green leafy vegetables such as spinach,
fenugreek, bathua, mint, mustard leaves,
drumstick leaves, other seasonal vegetables
including red-yellow vegetables and fruits like
carrot, pumpkin, guava, tomato, citrus fruits
like orange, gooseberry, papaya, lemon etc.



WHY

is it important to have a balanced diet?

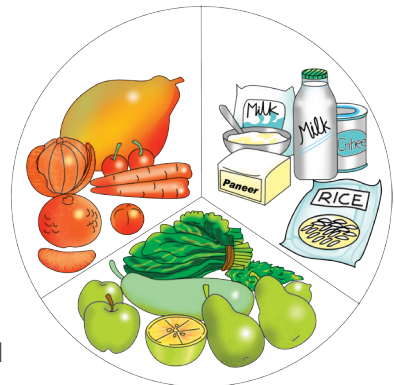
- During adolescence, daily diet has to meet the increased requirement for physical growth and mental development.
- Healthy balanced diet with energy giving, body-building and protective foods aid in the normal growth and development of adolescents.
- A balanced diet helps to keep girls and boys strong, so that they can effectively carry out their daily activities like studying, playing and socializing.
- Protective foods help the body fight illness and prevent infections.

HOW

to plan a balanced diet?

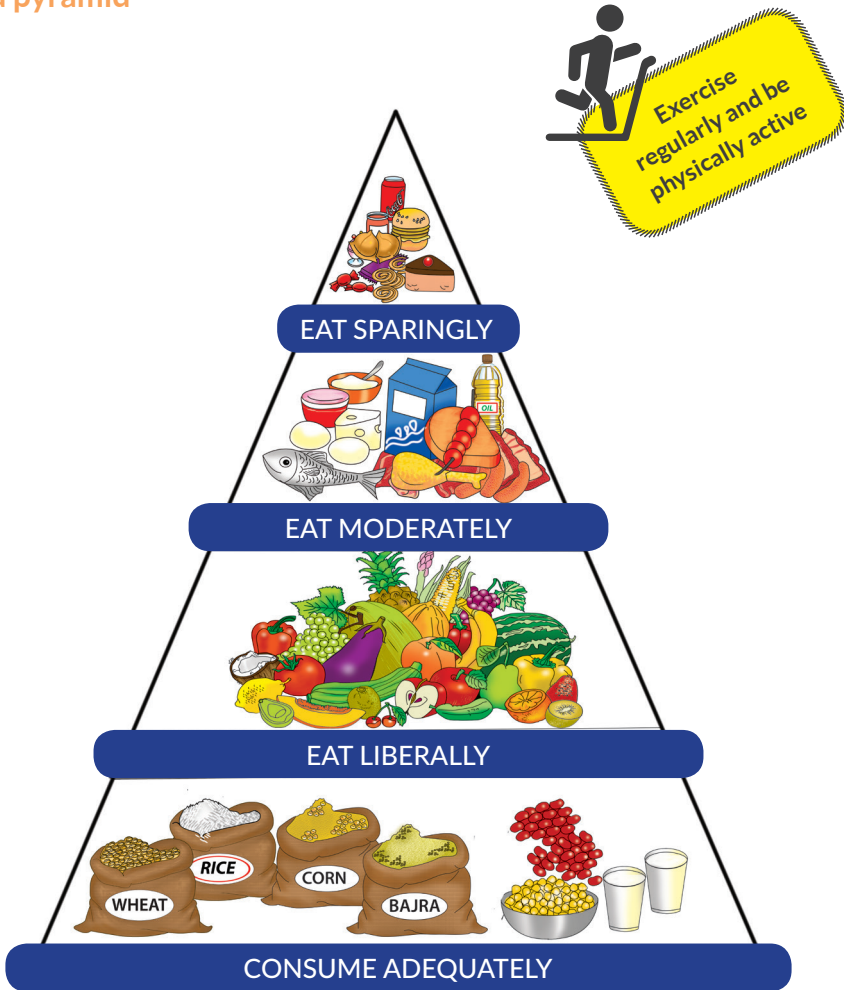
Tiranga thaali

Adolescents need to eat a variety of food items every day that provide all the nutrients to their bodies. An easy way to remember the Tiranga thaali is through the colours of the Indian National Flag – Orange, White and Green. Try to include in every meal and especially during lunch and dinner, the food groups of each of the three colours of the Indian National Flag.



- Orange (orange-colored fruits and vegetables)
- White (carbohydrate rich foods – cereals like rice and dairy products)
- Green (Green vegetables especially green leafy vegetables)

Food pyramid



Abstain from
drinking alcohol

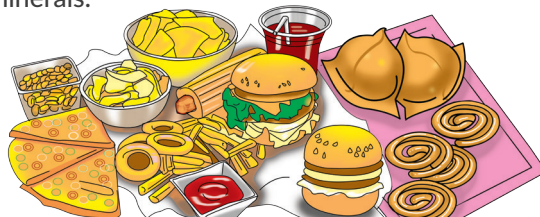
Say NO to
tobacco

Remember!

- Cereals should be consumed as the main source of energy but should not be the only food item.
- These should be consumed along with pulses, eggs, milk and meat preparations to improve the quality of protein.
- Consumption of moderate amount of fats like ghee, oil and butter is important.
- Daily consumption of 2-3 types of vegetables is important. In at least one meal of the day, inclusion of green leafy vegetables is recommended.
- Daily use of iodized salt is highly essential.
- Presence of certain food items in our diet are known to increase or decrease iron absorption. They are termed Enhancers and Inhibitors respectively. Some of the Enhancers and Inhibitors are:

| Enhancers | Inhibitors |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Haem iron, present in meat, poultry, fish and seafood▪ Ascorbic acid or (vitamin C), present in fruits, juices, potatoes and some other tubers, and other vegetables such as green leaves, cauliflower, and cabbage▪ Fermented or germinated food | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Cereal bran, cereal grains, high-extraction flour, legumes, nuts and seeds.▪ Tea, coffee, cocoa, herbal infusions in general, certain spices (e.g. oregano)▪ Calcium, particularly from milk and milk products. |

- Avoid sweets, packaged and processed foods, junk 'fast' foods, soft drinks etc. These foods are high in calories and low in nutrients. Excessive intake of such foods can lead to increased weight, high blood pressure and diabetes as well as also lead to deficiencies of vitamins and minerals.



Be Solid. Prevent anemia and iron- deficiency

WHAT

is anemia?

Low iron levels in blood prevent the formation of a substance called “hemoglobin” which is essential for healthy red-colored blood. Poor availability of iron to the body and poor formation of haemoglobin in blood results in anemia.

WHAT

are the causes of
anemia?

During adolescence, the requirement of iron in the body increases. One of the most common causes of anemia is deficiency of iron to meet the requirements of the body. It can be caused by low dietary intake of iron or when iron from the diet is not absorbed. In addition, deficiency of iron can also be caused due to loss of iron from the body, such a loss could be a result of chronic infections, malaria or worm infestation. Adolescent girls are at higher risk of such loss of iron due to menstruation.



Poor nutrition and anemia are common during adolescence. Such conditions are detrimental to not only physical development but also adversely impacts mental development to optimum capacity. Poor nutrition negatively impacts the scholastic achievements as well as physical work and output.



WHY

prevent
anemia among
adolescents?

- Adolescents with anemia have low immunity marked by frequent infections leading to absenteeism from school.
- They are also unable to concentrate in their studies resulting in poor performance in school.
- It can lead to irregular menstruation in girls.
- Adolescent girls growing up with anemia suffer later in adulthood as it poses higher risk during pregnancy for both mother and child. If anemia persists and is untreated, it can later affect the newborn child born to an anemic mother.

HOW

can you identify or
recognize anemia?

The best method to identify anemia is by testing the levels of hemoglobin in blood.

Other methods described below help recognize anemia:

- Examination of lower eyelids, tongue and nails. Not healthy pink in colour but look pale and dull.
- Feeling of persistent tiredness, laziness. Poor participation in physical activities or games.
- Easy onset of breathlessness. Feeling tired and out of breath even while undertaking simple physical exercises such as climbing stairs.

The Blue Tablet

WHAT

is the blue tablet?

The blue tablet is an IFA tablet which contains iron (60mg) and folic acid (500mcg). It is a “Nutrient Supplement” and not a medicine.

WHY

should an adolescent girl or boy consume it?

Iron is crucial along with other essential nutrients to aid rapid growth in adolescents. The daily diet among adolescents is often unable to meet the increased requirements of iron.

The blue tablet is therefore, an important supplement to the diet provided in the form of iron folic acid tablets. **Weekly consumption of one blue IFA tablet helps the body to build hemoglobin and prevent anemia.** Prevention of anemia improves physical stamina and mental capacity. It improves appearance, helps to remain active and look fit. As mental and physical capacity improves, girls and boys become more enthusiastic in learning activities thus, preventing absenteeism in schools. It also help skin and hair to remain healthy and glowing.

WHERE

can you get these blue IFA tablets?

The blue IFA tablets are provided free of cost in government, government-aided and municipal schools to all boys and girls of classes 6th to 12th.

For out-of-school girls, between 10–19 years of age, weekly IFA tablet is provided at the Anganwadi centres.

HOW

should the blue IFA tablet be consumed?



DOs

- Take one blue IFA tablet on the designated day every week
- Consume the IFA tablet in schools/AWC under the supervision of your teacher/AWW
- It is important to take the tablet at least one hour after meal.
- Best to swallow the whole tablet using potable drinking water.

DON'Ts

- Don't consume IFA supplements on an empty stomach
- Don't chew or break the tablet (swallow it with water)
- Don't swallow the tablet with milk
- Avoid taking tea/coffee/milk before and after one hour of meal, and after taking IFA tablet as it reduces the absorption of iron in the body
- If you are ill, don't take IFA tablets; resume taking the tablet after you recover.
- Always use footwear to avoid worm infestation

SAFE AND SURE WAY TO PREVENT ANEMIA



IFA supplements are very safe and have important benefits on the immune system, physical and mental health as well as an improvement in physical appearance. Few adolescents may experience mild discomforts in the beginning. Do not panic. These discomforts usually disappear on regular consumption of the tablets every week.

- After consuming IFA supplements, darkening of stool may be noticed, but there is no need to worry as this is normal.
- Few individuals might experience mild discomfort like nausea, vomiting and abdominal discomfort after consuming IFA tablets. These usually happen initially and subside with regular IFA supplementation.
- In case the discomfort persists, do not panic and inform your teacher/Anganwadi worker/ASHA worker and visit the nearest health facility.
- It is important to take only one tablet every week to prevent any discomfort.

Remember!.

Follow the do's and don'ts guidelines for the blue IFA tablet to be effective and to prevent any discomfort. Take the blue tablet every week even during school holidays. In case of any illness, skip the weekly dose and resume after recovery.

- Do you persistently feel tired?

You feel tired because your blood is not as red as it should normally be.

- Are you performing poorly in studies or unable to concentrate?

Iron deficiency in the body may be one of the reasons for poor performance in studies. Many times it is not your lack of interest but the lack of iron resulting in low hemoglobin in blood that leads to poor concentration in studies. This results in not being able to perform well in studies.

- Do you have pale eyes, dull skin and hair?

Consumption of iron and vitamin C rich foods and one blue IFA tablet every week can lead to skin not looking pale but glowing. Hair also looks healthier and shiny. Adequate iron in the body also helps to build muscles in growing children.

IMPORTANT!

- Include iron rich foods like green leafy vegetables, radish, carrot, dates, sesame, jaggery, lentils, legumes, drumstick leaf, ripe papaya, etc. in the diet.
- Consume flesh foods such as eggs, meat, chicken and fish if traditionally acceptable and affordable. Iron from flesh food is well absorbed by the body.
- Include vitamin C rich foods like: fresh coriander, (green) chutney, lemon juice squeezed into dals, sprouted dals, vegetable salads, gooseberry (amla), lemon, waterlemon, guava, oranges etc. to increase absorption of iron from food.



Be Smart. Prevent worm infestation

WHAT

is worm infestation?

Walking bare feet, use of unclean hands and consuming unhygienic water and food leads to entry of worms in the human body. This results in infestation of the body with worms and is called “worm infestation”.

WHY

does worm infestation cause anemia?

Once worms enter the body, they survive on the food we eat. They take away the nutrients from the food and deprive the host body of essential nutrients causing undernutrition and anemia. Infestation with worms such as hookworm, leads to loss of blood and results in anemia.

HOW

can worm infestation be prevented and treated?

Consumption of one deworming tablet (Albendazole) every six months is crucial to prevent and treat worm infestation. The deworming tablet is provided free of cost to all adolescent girls and boys in schools and to adolescent girls in Anganwadi centres.

An important approach to prevent worm infestation is by maintaining personal hygiene and cleanliness in the surroundings. Worms enter the body through naked feet so it is important to wear footwear while going to the toilet and while stepping outside the house.



Be Smart. Maintain personal hygiene and sanitation in surroundings

WHAT

is personal
hygiene?

Personal hygiene refers to conditions and practices that help adolescents to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases. It includes all circumstances including maintenance of hygienic sanitation conditions in premises, lifestyle choices and commodities that help create a safe and healthy environment.

WHY

are personal
hygiene and
sanitation
important?

Many common diseases like diarrhea, stomach ache and other infections including worm infestation are caused by micro-organisms that enter the body through unclean hands and feet and also, due to consumption of unhygienic drinking water and food.

HOW

to maintain
personal hygiene?

Personal hygiene means maintaining cleanliness of the body and surroundings. Maintaining hygiene helps prevent infections like diarrhea, flu and worm infestation.

It is important to wear footwear, wash hands with soap and clean water after using the toilet, before cooking and eating. The following practices will help adolescents maintain personal hygiene and achieve the goal of good health:

- Take bath every day using clean water and soap.
- Always wear clean clothes.
- Brush your teeth twice every day.
- Wash your hands with soap and clean water after using the toilet and before cooking or eating.
- Keep nails clean and well cut.
- Prevent head lice by washing hair regularly.
- Always wear footwear especially while going to the toilet and outside the house.

HOW

to maintain
hygiene during
menstruation?

It is very important that girls maintain hygiene during menstruation to prevent infections.

- Taking bath every day during menstruation helps maintain personal hygiene.
- Sanitary napkins or clean cotton cloth should be used during menses. In case of cloth, it should be thoroughly washed with soap and dried in the sun prior to reuse.



HOW

to maintain cleanliness in your surroundings?

Clean surroundings and sanitation hygiene also help in preventing infections. In order to maintain cleanliness of surroundings:

- Keep food and drinking water covered.
- Never throw garbage in the open. Use a closed bin for disposal of any waste.
- Always use toilets. Never defecate in the open.
- Do not let water accumulate in pots, tyres and puddles. Such stagnated water becomes a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Use mosquito nets to prevent malaria.
- Motivate others also to keep their houses and surroundings clean.



Remember!

Hand washing

It is important to wash hands after using the toilet, before cooking and eating. Hands must be washed with soap and clean water.

Be Solid and Smart



Lifestyle choices are crucial for good health. In addition to iron-rich food and a balanced diet, weekly blue IFA tablet, deworming tablet every six months, daily exercise, personal hygiene and clean surroundings, it is important for adolescent girls and boys to:

- Exercise regularly as it helps to remain fit and regulate body weight.
- Abstain from drinking alcohol, chewing tobacco and smoking.
- Avoid coffee, tea or milk for at least 1 hour before and after meals as it prevents iron absorption and results in anemia.
- Seek medical care for any chronic infections.
- Get tested if you have the symptoms. If diagnose with anemia, seek proper medical treatment.

4

MANTRAS

TO MAKE
ADOLESCENTS
SOLID
AND
SMART