

Primary Health for sustainable living

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The World Health Organization (WHO) in its constitution has very clearly defined the state referred to as 'health' as follows. "Being healthy is not only being free of any disease or disability, but also possessing a good quality physical, mental and social status" WHO. Therefore when describing and explaining the theme of primary health for sustainable living, it is important to discuss how the physical, mental and the social well being of an individual should be promoted. Even though on the face of it physical, mental and social aspects appear to be separate entities, these are entwined with one another not only to enhance a quality life, but also to strengthen each aspect. (Figure 1) A basic feature is that these aspects are not always maintained at a steady level, but frequently oscillate. Let us analyse each of these factors.

Physical well being

When discussing the physical well being it is necessary to consider it under five categories-being disease free, strong, physically fit, physically

developed and physically active.

Disease Free

When subjected to a physical disability, or an infection by an external disease causing organism (pathogen), there is a break down of the healthy state. Then we have to revert to the healthy status by getting the necessary treatment. In addition, consuming beneficial food, having the correct habits regarding nutrition, fulfilling the required immunisations, and following hygienic routines (washing hands, brushing teeth, bathing, wearing foot wear and clean clothes) can contribute towards safe guarding good health. Also it is necessary to follow a life style which is conducive to good

health right from childhood. It is absolutely necessary for all of us who aspire to lead a healthy life to adopt a good life style.

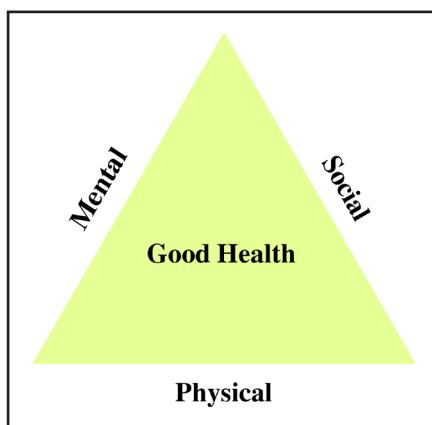
What is a good life style?

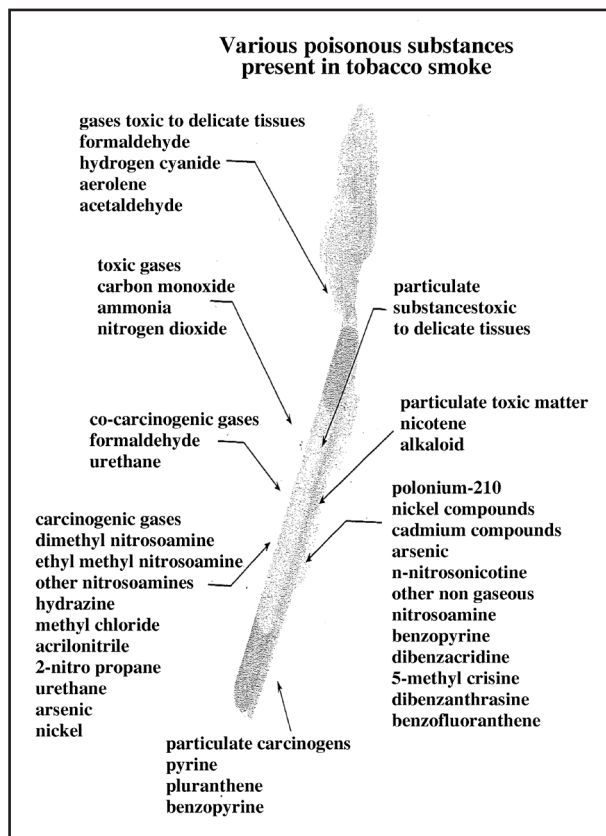
The most important requirement to achieve a high standard of health is to maintain a good life style. For this a few steps have to be followed:

- Consume health friendly food
- Maintain a body weight that is not a threat to health
- Be active
- Avoid smoking and 'drugs' and reduce alcohol consumption to a minimum
- Adopt a stress free life style and be contented with what you have
- Have rest and sleep comfortably

A health friendly meal

It is necessary to have health friendly food for all three meals of the day. Refrain from skipping a meal in order to reduce the food intake. Also remember that you should not have a large amount of food such that your stomach is





over filled. Unpolished parboiled (*Thambapu*) or raw (*Kekulu*) rice, bread turned out of whole wheat grain flour, dried pulses such as gram, cowpea green gram, ulundu, fish, meat from which the fatty portions have been removed, vegetables and fruits should be included in a health friendly diet. It is best if two or more types of vegetables and fruits are included in the meals of a day. They should not be over washed when cleaning or over boiled because this removes or destroys some of the nutrients. The nutritional value of the meal increases if they contain less of white rice (polished rice), white wheat flour (in which the bran has been removed) sugar, honey, jaggery, oils and fats and salt. Red meat (beef, mutton, lamb) meats containing oils and fat (pork), prawns, crabs, oysters are considered to be of less nutritional value because they increase the

cholesterol and fat content in the body. Sausages with high fat content, meat balls, canned meat and fish and instant (ready made) foods, supply unnecessary oils, fats and salt. Tempered foods, deep fried foods such as cutlets, and 'wade', hoppers and string hoppers of lesser nutritional value, aerated drinks (cool drinks), fruit drinks containing a great deal of sugar bring about many health problems.

Developing an active life style

The lethargic type of life style that one develops by lounging all day, watching television, reading papers etc. bring ill health close to you. So, carry out some physical exercise for at least 15 minutes a day on at least 4 days of the week. Walking, jogging, running, cycling, swimming and playing a ball game help to maintain you in good health. If you are an athlete or take part in some active games it is necessary to do some physical exercises for a longer time and daily. Get advice from your trainer or a doctor for this purpose.

There is a formula that you can use to determine your pulse rate in order to assess whether you exercise in a fruitful manner.

The formula is:

$$(220 - \text{age}) \times 70 / 100 = \text{Beats per minute}$$

Example : If you are 40 years of age

$$(220 - 40) \times 70 / 100 = 120 \text{ beats per}$$

minute

The main advantages of carrying out physical exercises

- Strengthening the muscles of the body and heart
- Reduction of the risk of contracting infectious diseases
- Avoiding over weight (obesity) by burning the fat
- Increasing mental health by the reduction of tension or stress

Maintenance of a proper body weight

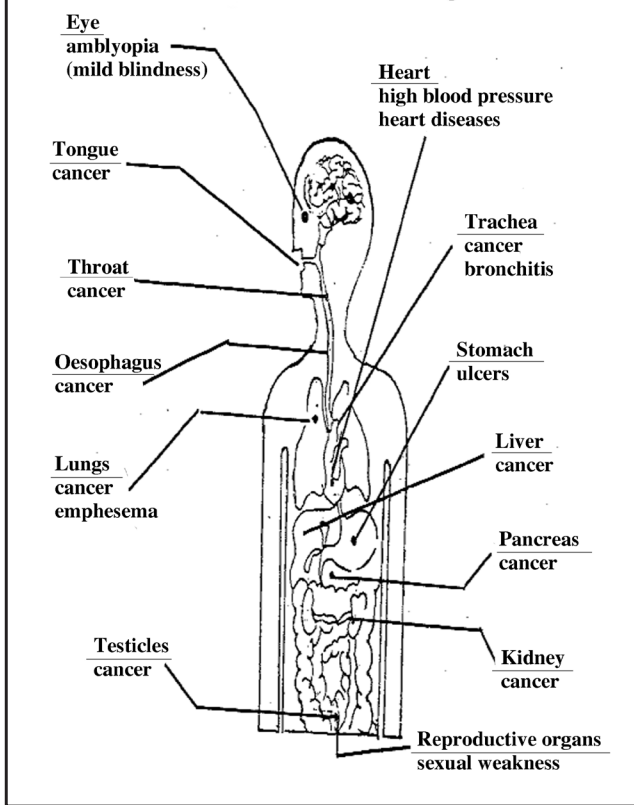
It is absolutely necessary to maintain the proper body weight that suits your age. The best measure that is currently used for this is the Body Mass Index (see the section on body growth) Also, maintain your body shape as that of a "pear" and not of an "apple". A male (man) should try to maintain a waist circumference of 40 inches and a female (women) 35 inches. Developing a large sized abdominal region is the cause of many unhealthy conditions.

Avoid smoking and "drugs"

Smoking increases the threat of developing cancers in many organs such as the tongue, throat, mouth, lungs, respiratory tubes, stomach, liver, pancreas, testicles and kidneys. It also paves the way for the development of heart diseases, high blood pressure, stroke, stomach ulcers, inflammation of respiratory tubes, emphysema, blindness and impotence.

Alcohol consumption causes many disease conditions including blindness, tremor of hands and legs, cirrhosis of the liver, nerve diseases, burning sensation of the

Ill effects of Smoking



stomach, damage of brain cells, cancer of many organs such as of the mouth, throat, oesophagus, liver and lungs. So in order to distance yourself from these threats you must try to keep off smoking and consumption of alcohol.

It is also necessary to remember that the betel leaves, areconut, lime, tobacco etc. contained in the betel chew and 'beda' cause cancers specially of the mouth and the oesophagus.

Be contented and happy with what you have in order to reduce tension. A certain degree of tension is necessary to face examinations and to win competitive games. However, if the state of tension persists after the relevant event, then it is a disease state. The excited or the restless condition caused by an event or a situation can be considered as stress or tension.

It is necessary to investigate the reason for this tension and get rid of it. It is also possible to get relief by reading, indulging in pleasurable activity, singing, listening to songs and music, keeping pets, meditation, praying and making offerings to deities etc.

It is great if you realize that you have reached the zenith in your life achievements and be satisfied with that. Being content with what you have got and not try to reach for the skies, helps you to get rid of tension and stress.

Rest and Sleep

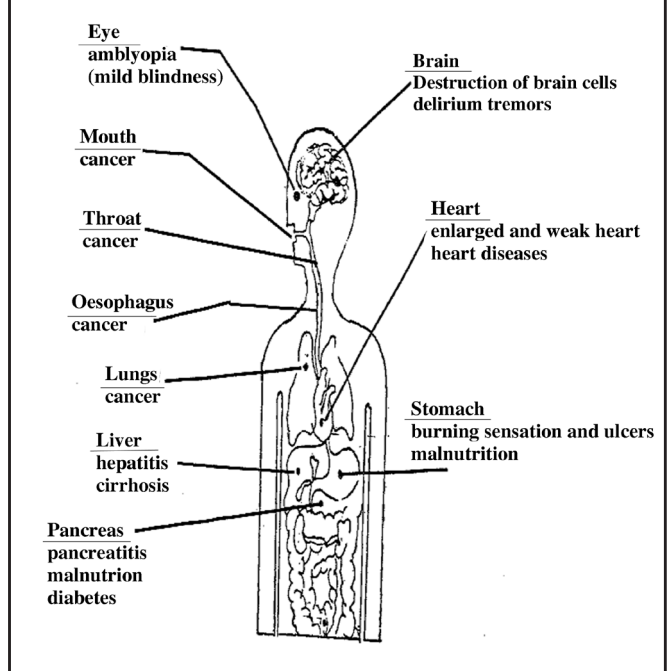
Even though it is beneficial to work hard through the day, in order to reap the real benefits of hard work it is necessary to set aside sometime to rest also. An essential requirement to maintain good health is to ensure at least 6-8 hours of comfortable sleep in the night. If you are in 'sleep debt' to your self by

denying the required sleep, then you pay the interest by way of ill health.

Physical development

The main evidence which indicates that a new born baby has acquired the required physical development is that its weight is either 2.5kg or more. If we consider the entire life span, the fastest physical development takes place during the first year after birth when the weight increases three fold and the height increases by 50%. Even though the rate of growth is not as fast, during the adolescent years also, the rate of growth is fast. Furthermore, once the full growth potential is reached at a certain age, there is no further growth. This age limit is 19-20 years for males and 12-18 for females. The increase in fatness which takes place is due to fat deposition, which is not considered as healthy growth. So we have to see to it that the children get a nutritionally balanced diet, and that they get opportunities

Ill effects of alcohol



Exercise :

Time required depends on the exertion

Minimum exertion	Little exertion	Moderate exertion	High exertion	Maximum exertion
	60 mins	30-60 mins	20-30 mins	
very slow walk	slow walk	brisk walking	aerobic	sprinting
dusting	playing volley ball	cycling	slow running	competitive running (races)
	minor work in the garden	raking leaves	hockey	
	stretching exercises	sweeping the garden	basket ball	
		swimming	fast swimming	
		dancing	fast dancing	

The range that helps to be healthy

- Walk when ever possible
 - walk to the bus halt
 - walk the rest after getting off the bus
 - climb the stairs instead of using the lift
- Minimize the activities which do not provide exercise-example watching television
- Get up from the chair at least once in an hour and stretch yourself
- Play actively with your children
- Initially walk for ten minutes, later increase the duration as well as the speed

for physical exercise so that they achieve the growth targets before they pass the above mentioned ages.

In order to determine whether the growth in adults is satisfactory or not, a formula referred to as the Body Mass Index (BMI) can be used.

Body Mass Index = Weight in Kg/ Height (M) x Height (M)

BMI can be used to assess whether growth is at a healthy level, and also to determine the nutritional

status and the status of health. The following values are general guide-lines

<18 - Malnutrition
 20-24 - Satisfactory
 24-30 - Hypernutrition
 30> - Over Weight (Obese)

So if the value is between 24-30 there is the risk of that person becoming unhealthy and getting ill. If the value is over 30 then it can be considered that such a person is already unhealthy. The commonest

non-communicable diseases of the modern day are diabetes, highblood pressure, heart diseases, stroke, cancer, arthritis and kidney failure.

Energy

We can say that being energetic is to be able to accomplish the days activities with enthusiasm. This energy required will vary according to the individuals occupation and life style. The energy required by a farmer, labourer or an athlete will be more than that required by a doctor, teacher, clerk or a student. So it is necessary to adjust the energy intake through food to suit ones requirement.

If the energy supplied by the carbohydrates, fats and oils exceeds the energy spent by an individual it will lead to obesity and thereby lead to non-communicable diseases.

Body Fitness

Even though not much attention is paid to body-fitness in Sri Lanka other countries in the world consider it important and the people indulge in activities such as swimming, gymnastics, daily exercises and cycling. Since of late

$$\text{ශරීර ස්කන්ධ දර්ශකය} - \text{ශ. ස්. ද} = \frac{\text{බර (කි. ග්.)}}{\text{උස (මීටර්)} \times \text{උස (මීටර්)}} = \frac{\text{Weight (Kg)}}{\text{Height (M)} \times \text{Height (M)}}$$

$$\text{Body Mass Index - B. M. I} = \frac{\text{Weight (Kg)}}{\text{Height (M)} \times \text{Height (M)}}$$

Sri Lankans have begun to pay attention to body fitness and it is a health friendly attitude. Body fitness is measured by the amount of “work” that can be carried out during a specific period of time (example: determining the distance run within 5 mins, or by measuring the time taken to complete a specified activity-such as the time taken to run 400 meters) The standards of determining fitness vary with the methods applied. It is possible to raise the level of fitness by engaging in drills, gymnastics, swimming, running, walking, ball games and cycling.

Physical activities

A healthy life is an active life. It is not healthy to lead a lethargic and a sleepy life. It is necessary to maintain muscles, limbs and all organs in a working or an active state at any age- even at old age-

by carrying out ones own work. It is better for small children and students to engage in some physical activities and games, rather than always being with their books and therefore being physically inactive.

Mental well being

Mental well being is to maintain the mental health at a high level. It is possible to measure mental well being by assessing the degree of happiness, enthusiasm, independence, maintenance of life, skills, creativity and enjoyment.

Happiness

It is possible to get an idea of whether a person is happy and healthy or unhappy and declined in health by looking at his face. A smiling face is like a mirror showing good health. Being happy helps to be healthy, to live long and to carry

out work in an efficient manner. It has been found that being happy increases the level of immunity (ability to prevent getting infected) while diminished happiness weakens the extent of immunity.

Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is an extension of happiness. Enthusiasm provides the necessary background to carry out the daily activities with maximum zest and interest.

Independence

When there is no independence or limited independence mental health declines. The young, the adults and old people view rigid laws and regulations and punishments in a discontented manner. We have to accept that every body appreciates the freedom to live independently. For most people it is essential to be able to limit ones privacy to one self.

Life Skills

It is the life skills that enable us to face the various challenges and problems which arise on a daily basis. These skills are also identified as phycho social skills. Given below are some of the life skills.

Ability to take decisions

Inability to take the correct decisions when required results in repentance. For example a student has to decide the field of study he hopes to follow in the future. Prior to taking any decisions it is necessary to be informed of all the relevant facts and to be aware of the consequence of the decision. It is also important to consider

Refer the chart given below to determine whether your weight suits your height

WEIGHT	lbs	90	100	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250	260	270	280	290
kg	41	45	50	54	59	64	68	73	77	82	86	91	95	100	104	109	113	118	122	127	132	
HEIGHT	cm	Underweight					Healthy					Overweight					Obese					Extremely Obese
ft/in	cm																					
4'8"	142.2	20	22	25	27	29	31	34	36	38	40	43	45	47	49	52	54	56	58	61	63	65
4'9"	144.7	19	22	24	26	28	30	32	35	37	39	41	43	45	48	50	52	54	56	58	61	63
4'10"	147.3	19	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	61
4'11"	149.8	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58
4'12"	152.4	18	20	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	35	37	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	57
5'1"	154.9	17	19	21	23	25	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	43	45	47	49	51	53	55
5'2"	157.4	16	18	20	22	24	26	27	29	31	33	35	37	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54
5'3"	160.0	16	18	19	21	23	25	27	28	30	32	34	35	37	39	41	43	44	46	48	50	51
5'4"	162.5	15	17	19	21	22	24	26	27	29	31	33	34	36	38	39	41	43	45	46	48	50
5'5"	165.1	15	17	18	20	22	23	25	27	28	30	32	33	35	37	38	40	42	43	45	47	48
5'6"	167.6	15	16	18	19	21	23	24	26	27	29	31	32	34	36	37	39	40	42	44	45	47
5'7"	170.1	14	16	17	19	20	22	24	25	27	28	30	31	33	34	36	38	39	41	42	44	45
5'8"	172.7	14	15	17	18	20	21	23	24	26	27	29	30	32	33	35	37	38	40	41	43	44
5'9"	175.2	13	15	16	18	19	21	22	24	25	27	28	30	31	33	34	35	37	38	40	41	43
5'10"	177.8	13	14	16	17	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	29	30	32	33	34	36	37	39	40	42
5'11"	180.3	13	14	15	17	18	20	21	22	24	25	27	28	29	31	32	33	35	36	38	39	41
5'12"	182.8	12	14	15	16	18	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	28	30	31	33	34	35	37	38	39
6'1"	185.4	12	13	15	16	17	18	20	21	22	24	25	26	28	29	30	32	33	34	36	37	38
6'2"	187.9	12	13	14	15	17	18	19	21	22	23	24	25	27	28	30	31	32	33	35	36	37
6'3"	190.5	11	13	14	15	16	18	19	20	21	23	24	25	26	28	29	30	31	33	34	35	36
6'4"	193.0	11	12	13	15	16	17	18	19	21	22	23	24	26	27	28	29	30	32	33	34	35
6'5"	195.5	11	12	13	14	15	17	18	19	20	21	23	24	25	26	27	28	30	31	32	33	34
6'6"	198.1	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	20	21	22	23	24	25	27	28	29	30	31	32	34
6'7"	200.6	10	11	12	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	32	33
6'8"	203.2	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	32
6'9"	205.7	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
6'10"	208.2	9	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
6'11"	210.8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	25	26	27	28	29	30

whether there are alternative paths of solving the problem, before taking any decision.

It is important to consider whether the decision taken is reasonable. Remember that one has to take the sole responsibility for the decision that one takes. If the decision is taken as a team it is necessary to respect the decision of the team.

Solving Problems

One must not run away from a problem or blame and place the responsibility on others. Obtain the correct information about the problem and investigate to determine as to how it can be solved. For certain problems there may be more than one solution. It is your responsibility to select the best solution or the set of solutions. If you are unable to solve the problem by yourself do not hesitate to get advice from a suitable knowledgeable person.

Creative Thinking

Learn to look at things from an unusual or unorthodox angle. Then you will be able to identify the connections between various factors, to act in a manner appropriate to the situation and to face the daily challenges in a novel way.

A great President of the United States of America-John Kennedy said that he needs people who can think in a novel manner. Analytical thinking and thinking deeply about a particular matter, fruitful communication, maintaining interpersonal relationships, understanding one self, empathy, ability to face emotions and mental stress are some of the life skills.

Enjoyment

This is the capacity to be happy and be content with what one does and sees. Most of us possess the skills of being creative, singing, dancing, playing music, playing games and fashion designing are some creative skills. Also we should be able to enjoy listening to songs and music, watching dancing and dramas. If not we will be considered as people who are subjected to mental stress and of weekend mental health.

Benevolent thoughts

In a healthy mind good quality thoughts such as kindness, compassion, tolerance will be born. As a result the chemical endoprin that is secreted in the brain will be increased. Endoprin has many desirable effects and also increases the immunity. Concomitant with benevolent thoughts, we are invariably directed towards benevolent activities too. It has been shown that religious activities such as meditation, praying, making offerings to deities also enhance mental health.

Maintenance of good social relationships

In the present world nobody can live in isolation. It is necessary to

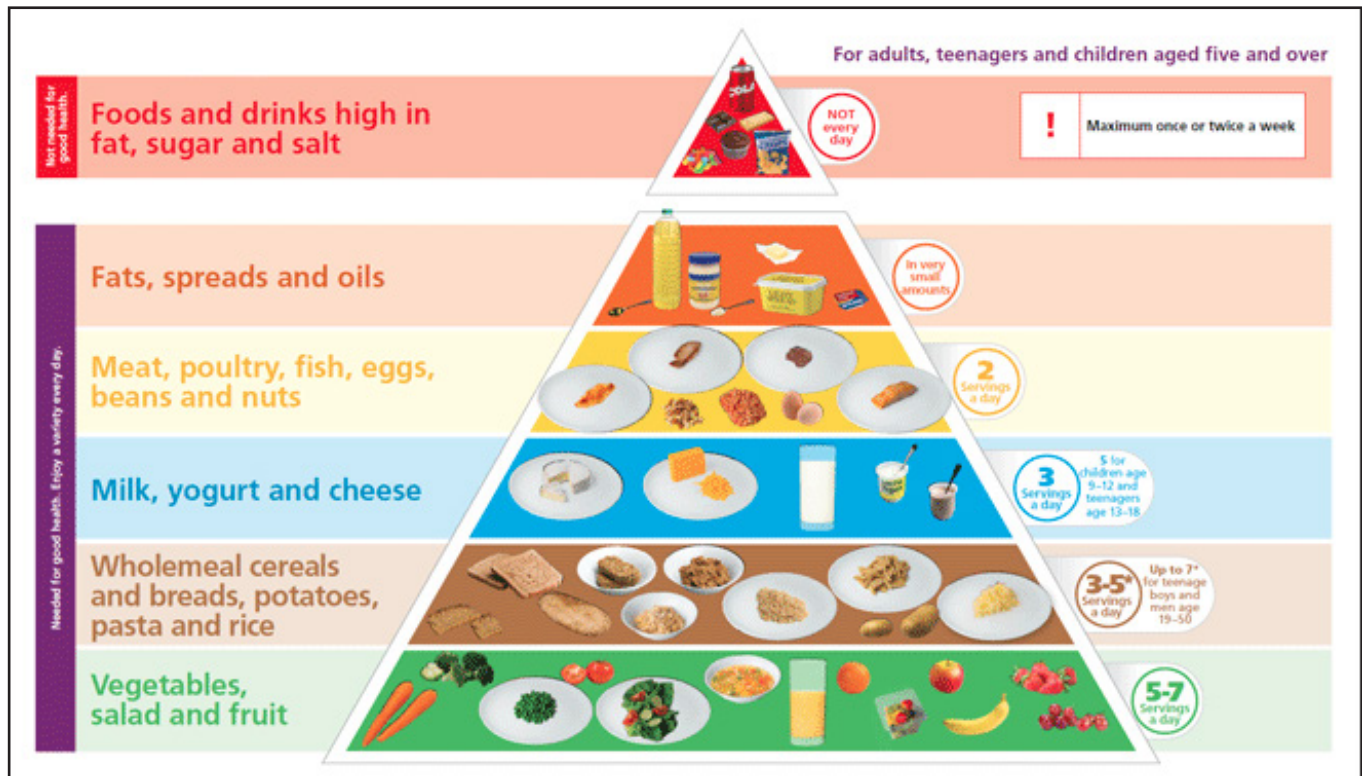
The table indicating the height and weight of a healthy Sri Lankan child according to the age

Age	Minimum weight required		Minimum height required			
Month	Kilograms	Pounds	Female		Male	
			cms	inches	cms	inches
03	5.89	13.00				
06	7.71	17.00	65	25.6	67	26.4
09	8.85	19.50				
12	9.75	21.60	74	29.1	76	29.9
15	10.43	23.00				
18	11.11	24.50	81	31.9	82	32.3
21	11.67	25.75				
24	12.24	27.00	87	34.3	87	34.3
27	12.70	28.00				
30	13.14	29.00	90	35.4	92	36.2
33	13.72	30.25				
36	14.15	31.25	93	36.6	95	37.4
39	14.74	32.60				
42	15.19	33.50	97	38.2	98	38.6
45	15.87	35.00				
48	16.32	36.00	102	40.2	103	40.6
51	16.78	37.00				
54	17.46	38.60	106	41.7	107	42.1
57	17.69	39.00				
60	18.25	40.25	109	42.9	110	43.3
63	18.59	41.00				
66	19.68	42.75	111	43.7	112	44.1
69	19.95	44.00				
72	20.41	45.00	114	44.9	116	45.7

live as a community in the society. There are some aspects connected with the social well being. Love, interaction with the society, role in the society and adapting according to the situation and being peaceful are some such factors.

Love

In order to live a balanced life it is necessary to receive love as well as to bestow love, from birth until we die. It is this necessity to be loved which makes the children who are deprived of love to wail, makes the men and women who are in their youth cry asking for love, and why the elderly implore saying "Feed me with one or two mouthfuls of rice with your hands etc". When deprived of love some people are driven to indulge in anti social activities and also in self destructive



acts (such as suicide). Love which is not expressed and not felt by the recipient is of no use. Parents specially should love their children so that the children feel that they are being loved. It is a primary necessity for their development.

Engagement with society

By associating and maintaining relationships with people in a friendly, pleasant and an agreeable manner creates opportunities to lead a life beneficial to oneself and to others. Being helpful to each other and living as a united group in the society is also a health requirement.

Adapting to the role and requirements of the society

Each of us have a specific role in the society. It is necessary to adapt to suit the different roles as the situation change at times. We have seen the school principal

or a teacher working as a farmer when he goes to the paddy field. It is necessary to adapt to the new role instead of rigidly sticking to the rules and regulations of the original role. For example if we participate in a wedding festival held in a five star hotel we have to use a spoon, fork/knife to eat instead of eating with the fingers, that we have been accustomed to. If there is no experience it would be uncomfortable to use these implements. So it is useful to be informed of how to adapt to the various situations. It is also relevant to be appropriately dressed when going to a temple or a similar place. There we have to be a religious person.

Peace

It is necessary to maintain peace with foreign nations and also in ones own country, village, community and home. Today it is punishable in law to illtreat and be

cruel to the wife, husband and the children.

Not having a bad temper, getting rid of anger and being patient and tolerant helps to build up a quality family life, maintain good health and also to reduce crimes. If any person safeguards and maintains a balanced and a high level of mental, physical and social well being, then such a person will enjoy a sustainable quality of healthy living.



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