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Therapeutic Nutrition-CC5

M.A Home Science 2nd Semester

UNIT—1

Meal Planning

Meaning:

Meal planning is a simple practical exercise which involves applying the knowledge of food, nutrient requirement, and individual preferences to plan adequate and acceptable meals. In other words, meal planning means planning for adequate nutrition. It is associated with food variety, diet quality and body weight status. Meal planning encourages healthy diet for the family.

Aims of Meal Planning are to:

- Fulfil the nutritional needs of the family members, taking into account the family size and composition.
- Plan meals within the family income.
- Minimize time, energy and fuel. Make meals appealing by proper selection of food in terms of colour texture and flavour.
- Provide nutritious meals.
- Utilize leftover economically.
- Decide amounts of foods to be purchased from each food group.
- Consider food storage space and conditions of storage.
- Prepare a food purchase list, taking care of the food preferences of members.
- Use methods of preparation, which retain nutrients, without sacrificing taste.

- Make sure that meal should be appetising and attractive and fit in the schedule of the members.

Importance of Meal Planning:

Nutritional requirement of the family can be met by proper meal planning otherwise meal may be adequate for one member and inadequate for the others. Eating together has many nutritional, social and psychological benefits. These are the following benefits:

- Helps to plan nutritious meal.
- Saves nutrients.
- Helps to prepare low cost meals and reuse of leftovers.
- Saves time, energy, money and fuel by:
 - a. Reducing grocery store trips
 - b. Knowing what to be prepared
 - c. Planning leftovers
 - d. Eating the right amount
- Gives a feeling of fullness and satisfaction.
- Helps to make attractive and appealing meals by adding variety to the taste, colour, texture and cooking methods.
- There must be selection of different foods for each day and this way one can add variety in the diet.
- Personal likes and dislikes of the family members can be taken care of by including foods of their preferences in meal planning.

Factors affecting meal planning:

- Nutritional Adequacy
- Social and Cultural System
- Economic considerations
- Food Acceptability
- Food Availability
- Food Cost
- Meal Pattern
- Variety
- Satiety Value
- Family Size and Composition
- Season and Climate

Nutritional Adequacy: The first prerequisite of a good meal plan is that it should meet the nutritional needs of the whole family. In a family, there are different members — a child, an

adolescent, an adult, a pregnant woman or an elderly person. Each of these individuals has their own specific nutrient requirements. The aim of meal planning is to fulfil the nutrient need of each individual.

Social and cultural system: Generally Social and cultural system influence food acceptance. In a meal planning, the various food preferences of religious groups should be considered.

Economic considerations: The income of the family, or more specifically, the amount of money available for food per person influences the kind and amount of food to be included in each meal.

Food Acceptance: Individual likes and dislikes, religious taboos, socio-cultural practices are some of the factors that influence an individual's acceptance or rejection of certain foods. While planning one should take into consideration all these aspects and accordingly select the foods.

Food Availability: The availability of certain food items in a particular region influences meal planning. For instance, in the coastal regions, fish and other sea foods are easily available and cheap. These foods form an essential part of the diet of people residing in the coastal region. Similarly, rice is a common staple food grown in the South. Hence, it forms the major ingredient in the meals planned for the Southern people.

Food Cost: Food cost is the most influencing factor in meal planning. It is important to plan meals and buy food wisely so that maximum benefit is derived from the money spent.

Meal Patterns: The number of meals consumed in different families varies. In some households only 2-3 meals are taken daily. Whereas, in other family 5-6 meals may be eaten in a day. The timings of these meals may also vary. The income, activity pattern, physiological state and age of the person influence meal patterns.

Variety in meals: No one likes to eat the same kind of foods every day. so, while planning meals, one should include variety of foods in the meal. A suitable combination of foods in terms of colour, texture, flavour and different methods of cooking should be considered.

Satiety value: Meals should be planned in such a way that would relieve hunger and give a feeling of satisfaction and fullness. Fat and protein-rich foods have high satiety value as compared to carbohydrate rich-foods. Hence, some amount of fat and protein foods must be included in each meal to provide adequate satiety.

Family size and composition: Family size and composition affect the kinds and amounts of food needed and the pattern of meals served. For e.g. when children are below 5 years of age, more milk is needed and numbers of feedings are larger. It is known that the money spent for food per person decreases as the family size increases.

Season and Climate: Seasonal foods are cheap and nutritious. So, foods available in the season must be considered.

Ref:

- (1) Dietetics –by B Srilakshmi
- (2) Nutrition and Dietetics -by Shubhangini A Joshi
- (3) A Textbook of Foods, Nutrition and Dietetics - by Raheena Begum
- (4) Fundamentals of foods, Nutrition and Diet therapy- by S.R.Mudambi

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