



SESSION 8: Nutrition

OBJECTIVES

1. To give an overview of basic nutrition for adults and children.
2. To prepare clients for a trip to the grocery store.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Flip Chart
Markers
Copies of “Food Guide Pyramid” (attachment 26)
Copies of “Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children” (attachment 27)
Sample food stamps
List of grocery stores and farmers markets in the community, names and locations
The Supermarket Game (attachment 28)

HOW TO DO IT

DISCUSSION

- Discuss using the following questions:
What foods did you eat in Somalia/Kakuma?
What are your favorite dishes?
What foods do you consider to be healthy?
What foods are good for children?
In Somalia/Kenya, where did you buy food?

NUTRITION

- Distribute copies of the food pyramid for adults (attachment 26) and for children (attachment 27) and review. Together, identify where foods such as *soor*, (corn meal porridge) beans, meat, vegetables, fruit, milk, and oil fall on the pyramid. Explain that large amounts of oil and other fatty foods can cause obesity – obesity can lead to diabetes, stroke, cancer, and disease. It is necessary for the body to consume some fat, but it is important to limit the amount. It is also important to limit sugar, particularly for children – if children fill up on sugar, they won’t be hungry for healthy foods. Sugar can also cause tooth decay. Explain to your clients that they will find that oil and sugar are plentiful in the United States –plentiful to the extent that many U.S. residents have serious health problems.

- Discuss breastfeeding. Explain that it is good that Somali Bantu women traditionally breastfeed their children. Breastfeeding is the most natural food for babies, and breastfeeding gives the child a much better chance of being healthy (reduces incidences of diarrhea, respiratory infection, sudden infant death syndrome, etc). The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that mothers breastfeed babies for at least 12 months, unless the mother has a serious illness, in which case she should consult her doctor. No other supplements should be given to breastfeeding newborns under the age of about six months unless the doctor instructs the mother to do so. (In East Africa, mothers sometimes give their young children small amounts of water to prevent dehydration.) Your clients may wish to consult their doctor for advice on a “best bet” diet for their children.

PURCHASING FOOD

- Discuss places to buy food in the United States. Families in the United States commonly go to grocery stores to shop for food, and these stores may range in size from a small corner store to a huge Wal-Mart-style store, and will contain fresh, frozen, canned fruits and vegetables, meat and packaged foods from all over the world. Often, communities will also have farmer’s markets, particularly in the spring, summer, and fall, where local farmers will sell fresh produce. Distribute and review the list of grocery stores in your community.
- *Halaal* meat is available in the United States, but cannot always be found at the grocery store. Clients may wish to contact the local Muslim community for information on where to purchase halaal meat.
- Discuss food stamps. The U.S. government gives food stamps to low income families to help them buy nutritious foods. Food stamps vary from state to state, but generally come in either plastic card or coupon form. Clients can spend food stamps like cash at most stores that sell food. Clients may not use food stamps to buy household items, or items such as alcohol, tobacco, or foods that are ready to eat. Clients may not sell, trade, or give away food stamps.
- Discuss WIC, the National School Lunch Program, the Nutrition Services Incentive Program, and any other nutritional assistance programs that your clients may qualify for.
- Play the supermarket game (attachment 28). (optional)

NOTE to CO Facilitator

The U.S. government has various nutrition assistance programs that clients may qualify for. See the USDA Food and Nutrition Service website for more information.