



**49th NUTRITION MONTH
TALKING POINTS**

Theme: “Healthy diet gawing affordable for all!”



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2023 NUTRITION MONTH TALKING POINTS

Theme: "Healthy diet gawing affordable for all!"

I. What is Nutrition Month?

Nutrition Month is an annual campaign held every July to create greater awareness on the importance of nutrition among Filipinos. Presidential Decree 491 (1974) or the Nutrition Act of the Philippines mandates the National Nutrition Council (NNC) to lead the nationwide campaign. This year marks the 49th Nutrition Month celebration.

II. What is the theme of the 49th Nutrition Month?

The National Nutrition Council (NNC) Technical Committee approved the Nutrition Month theme to focus on food affordability. The NNC Technical Committee agreed to support efforts to give Filipinos greater access to healthy, safe, affordable food. The theme was approved during the Technical Committee meeting on 25 January 2023 after an ad referendum in December 2022.

The theme "**Healthy diet gawing affordable for all!**" aims promote food and nutrition security, specifically affordability, and ensure the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food and be free from hunger. The campaign calls for relevant stakeholders to transform the food system and its key internal drivers to ensure affordability of nutritious foods as part of a healthy diet. The campaign calls for actions towards encouraging more Filipinos to support macro and micro-level efforts to reduce inefficiencies in food systems, thus, making healthy diet more accessible, available, and affordable for all. The theme is also aligned with the Philippine Development Plan, particularly Chapter 3 - Reduce Vulnerability and Protect Purchasing Power with the intended outcome of expanded access of consumers to affordable, safe, and nutritious food, and attainment of sufficient and stable supply of food commodities.

III. What are the Nutrition Month campaign objectives?

The Nutrition Month campaign aims to raise awareness on supporting Filipinos to improve access to affordable healthy diets to reduce malnutrition, and improve food security, health, and quality of life.

Specifically, the campaign aims to:

1. Engage consumers to support improvements in levels of diet quality towards sustainable healthy diets;

2. Generate participation of stakeholders at various levels on actions towards enabling access to affordable, sustainable healthy diets; and,
3. Call support for the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition 2023-2028 as the framework for action to improve nutrition security.

IV. What are the key messages of the 49th Nutrition Month?

For individuals, families and communities

1. Start children on a healthy diet with exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months and continue breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond with appropriate complementary feeding.
2. Eat various unprocessed or minimally processed foods, balanced across food groups while restricting highly processed food and drink products.
3. Have family and community food gardens as an additional source of food.
4. Buy food from local farmers.

For policymakers, program managers, and legislators at all levels

1. Issue legislation and policies that provide subsidies for fruits and vegetables and improve food value chains.
2. Reduce the availability of unhealthy food through taxation, restrictions on marketing, and consumer education.
3. Rechannel resources to agriculture to enable access to affordable, nutritious, and safe food.
4. Implement the PPAN 2023-2028 by scaling up food and nutrition security interventions.

For the food industry

1. Reformulate food products to reduce salt/sodium, saturated fat, free sugars
2. Eliminate the use of hydrogenized or partially hydrogenized oils to remove trans-fatty acids from food products
3. Produce healthier food products with less processing.

V. The Nutrition Month logo



Figure 1. 2023 Nutrition Month Logo

The Nutrition Month logo illustrates food items from the *Pinggang Pinoy* (Filipino Food Plate). It shows the peso bill to signify prices of the food items should be "*abot-kaya*" or affordable and not money being given. The pair of hands symbolizes the need to work together to support Filipinos' healthy diets. The logo depicts how the basic food items such as rice, fish, and commonly consumed fruits and vegetables like banana and malunggay can be within the means of Filipino families.

VI. What is the Nutrition Month Campaign strategy?

For the Nutrition Month campaign to reach as many audiences as possible, partners are encouraged to use the MURA NA strategies:

1. **Maximize** mass media and social media to promote Nutrition Month and its advocacy. From the national to the barangay level, the nutrition network will be urged to produce and upload campaign materials to reach as many audiences as possible.
2. **Unify** stakeholders for common joint actions to increase access to affordable, safe, sustainable healthy diets through multi-sectoral partnerships at various levels. Non-traditional sectors such as environmental advocates can be engaged to identify ways of reducing waste and improving food packaging; consumer groups for consumer education opportunities; and national and local legislators to enact laws or ordinances.
3. **Reinforce** participation of national government agencies, local government units, schools, and other learning institutions, NGOs, private sector by enjoining heads of these organizations to issue memoranda or other policies to urge their employees and clients to participate in the Nutrition Month campaign.
4. **Actively engage** food system actors for increased support to farmers to produce diverse food crops; improve value chains to reduce the cost of food, among others. Encourage food retailers such as public and private markets, supermarkets, groceries, *talipapa*, *sari-sari* stores, restaurants, *karinderias*, and vendo machine operators to offer healthier food options to consumers.
5. **Nurture** good practices on transforming the food systems for healthy diets that stakeholders can scale up and share in various events organized during Nutrition Month.
6. **Amplify** through dialogues and other fora the need to accelerate population-based policies and legislation identified in the Philippine Development Plan, Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition, Health Promotion Strategy, and other documents that support healthy diets. These can include the development of updated food-based dietary guidelines, nutrition labeling, regulation of the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages, and taxation of unhealthy foods.

VII. What is a *healthy diet*?

Healthy diet is an important aspect in achieving a functioning and well-nourished body. It needs to start early in life through proper and adequate breastfeeding and should be continued as a person develops and grows. Healthy diet serves as the foundation for health, well-being, optimal growth and development in all life stages in

order to prevent all forms of malnutrition [1] including undernutrition, such as wasting, stunting, underweight or deficiencies in vitamins or minerals [2] and the risks of noncommunicable diseases or NCDs which includes heart diseases, diabetes, and certain types of cancers. There is evidence of the health benefits of a diet high in whole grains, vegetables, fruit, legumes, and nuts, and low in salt, free sugars and fats, particularly saturated and trans fats.

Considerations in determining a healthy diet can include individual needs, access and availability of food items, cultural norms, and dietary customs. With these factors, the World Health Organization designed a recommendation that generally follows the basic principles that can serve as a guide to the public on healthy diet which includes:

1. Eating a variety of foods with lots of plant-based sources to meet the daily needs for energy, protein, vitamins, and minerals. Also, balance your energy intake with your energy expenditure.
2. Consuming carbohydrate food sources as your main and largest source of energy, mainly through consumption of legumes and whole grains.
3. Reducing total fat intake daily to less than 30% of total energy intake by limiting consumption of saturated fats and avoiding industrial trans fats. Instead, shift to unsaturated fat sources.
4. Limiting free sugar intake to less than 10% or ideally 5% of total energy intake.
5. Limiting sodium intake to less than 2 grams per day or an equivalent to a teaspoon of salt, and
6. Consumption of 400 grams of fruits and vegetables per day (around 5 portions in total). [1][3]

Infants need to have a healthy diet as optimal nutrition during this stage aids in healthy growth, improved cognitive development, and reduced risk of overweight/obesity and developing NCDs as the child grows older.

It is recommended that infants should be:

1. Exclusively breastfed from birth up to 6 months of life
2. Should be continuously breastfed until 2 years of age and beyond, and
3. From 6 months, complementary feeding must be initiated alongside breastfeeding. It must be a variety of safe, nutrient-dense foods, and ideally with no added salts or sugar. [3]

VIII. What are sustainable healthy diets?

Aside from determining what foods comprise, a healthy diet must also be sustainable. The EAT-Lancet Commission defines that healthy diets to be sustainable are those that leans towards the inclusion of plant-based food items in daily food consumption (such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, and nuts), and decrease in consumption

of red meat, sugar, and refined grains in order to not only nurture human health as it can provide long-term health benefits to an individual, but to support environmental sustainability to reduce production of greenhouse gases that contributes to the global climate change problem as well [4].

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) provides guiding principles for sustainable healthy diets [2]:

Guidelines regarding health aspects:

1. Start early in life with early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding until six months of age, and continued breastfeeding until two years and beyond, combined with appropriate complementary feeding;
2. Are based on a great variety of unprocessed or minimally processed foods, balanced across food groups, while restricting highly processed food and drink products;
3. Include whole grains, legumes, nuts and an abundance and variety of fruits and vegetables;
4. Can include moderate amounts of eggs, dairy, poultry and fish; and small amounts of red meats;
5. Include safe and clean drinking water as the fluid of choice;
6. Are adequate (i.e., reaching but not exceeding needs) in energy and nutrients for growth and development, and to meet the needs for an active and healthy life across the lifecycle;
7. Are consistent with WHO guidelines to reduce the risk of diet-related NCDs, and ensure health and wellbeing for the general population;
8. Contain minimal levels, or none if possible, of pathogens, toxins and other agents that can cause foodborne disease;

Guidelines regarding environmental impact:

9. Maintain greenhouse gas emissions, water and land use, nitrogen and phosphorus application and chemical pollution within set targets;
10. Preserve biodiversity, including that of crops, livestock, forest-derived foods and aquatic genetic resources, and avoid overfishing and overhunting.
11. Minimize the use of antibiotics and hormones in food production;
12. Minimize the use of plastics and derivatives in food packaging;
13. Reduce food loss and waste;

Guidelines regarding sociocultural aspects:

14. Are built on and respect local culture, culinary practices, knowledge and consumption patterns, and values on the way food is sourced, produced and consumed;
15. Are accessible and desirable; and,
16. Avoid adverse gender-related impacts, especially with regard to time allocation (e.g., for buying and preparing food, water and fuel acquisition).

Overall, sustainable healthy diets promote a holistic approach in promoting sustainability and healthiness of a diet, which also considers the environmental pressure and impact, accessibility, affordability, safeness, equitability, and culturally acceptability of the food items in a healthy diet.

IX. Why is it important for Filipinos to have healthy diets?

Countries, including the Philippines, are committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including Target 2, "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture" by 2030. However, actions to achieve this target appear to be insufficient. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 [5] stated that "The intensification of the major drivers behind recent food insecurity and malnutrition trends (i.e., conflict, climate extremes, and economic shocks) combined with the high cost of nutritious foods and growing inequalities will continue to challenge food security and nutrition. It will be the case until agrifood systems are transformed, become more resilient, and deliver sustainably and inclusively lower cost nutritious foods and affordable healthy diets for all."

The right to adequate food is crucial for the enjoyment of all human rights (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). It is "the availability of food in a quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of individuals, free from adverse substances, and acceptable within a given culture; The accessibility of such food in ways that are sustainable and that do not interfere with the enjoyment of other human rights."

Achieving the SDG 2 targets requires ensuring that people have enough food to eat and that what they eat is nutritious. However, a major obstacle to achieving the SDG 2 targets is the rising cost and affordability of healthy diets.

X. What are the levels of diet quality?

In describing healthy diets, it is important to understand the levels of diet quality. (See Figure 2) There are essentially three levels starting with Energy-sufficient diets which consist of lower quality food with high calories, lower nutritional value and only provide for short-term needs.

The second level which is the nutrient adequate diet which is able to meet required energy levels of essential nutrients by age group and gender through consumption of

whole foods instead of highly processed foods and calorie-dense but nutrient-deficient foods such as added sugars. This level may not necessarily involve a variety of food groups, as long as the required energy and nutrients are satisfied. This is where the context of a healthy diet takes food consumption to another level.

A healthy diet should have balance, variety and moderation and have greater diversity within food groups. Having a healthy diet means that the dietary recommendations intended to provide nutrient adequacy and long-term health for an individual is being met. A healthy diet is the combination of the first two levels wherein it provides sufficient energy from calories and adequate levels of essential nutrients, with inclusion of diversity across and within food groups which typically includes food items such as whole grains, cereals, root crops, fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, lentils, lean meats, eggs, fish, low fat milk and dairy, and oils from plant sources, with minimal to no added fats, especially if from animal sources and trans fats, sugars and sweeteners, or high in sodium food items [6].

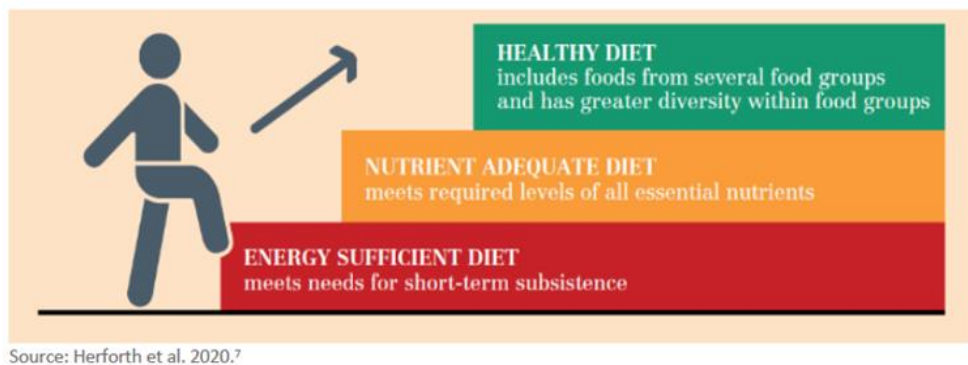


Figure 2. Diet quality levels

XI. Are Filipinos consuming healthy diets?

According to the results of the 2021 Expanded National Nutrition Survey [7], about 2% or 5.3 million Filipinos experienced severe food insecurity and 33.4% or 42 million experienced moderate food insecurity. This translates to about 3 out of 10 households that have experienced moderate to severe food insecurity. One of the pillars of food security is access in which a factor is the price of food.

For infants, the ENNS reported that exclusive breastfeeding among infants under 6 months was only 60.1% while continued breastfeeding at 2 years was only 41.8%. As for children aged 6-23 months, only 13.8% received the minimum variety of foods, indicating low dietary diversity. To have a healthy diet, there should be at least 5 or more food groups consumed from the following eight (8) food groups: 1) breastmilk, 2) grains, roots and tubers and plantains, 3) dairy products, 4) legumes and nuts, 5) flesh foods or meats, 6) eggs, 7) Vitamin-A rich fruits and vegetables, and 8) other fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, only 13.3% of young children 6-23 months received the minimum acceptable diet wherein a child meets the minimum dietary

diversity and the minimum meal frequency per day, and poor feeding practices remains a significant challenge in this age group.

Further, majority of Filipinos are not able to even meet their energy requirements. According to the 2021 ENNS [7] these age groups are not meeting the 100% Daily Recommended Energy Intake (REI) as follows: 76.7% of infants 6 to 11 months, 77.6% of young children 1 to 2 years, 88.2% of toddlers 3 to 5 years, and 9 in 10 school-age children, adolescents, adult, pregnant, lactating, and elderly.

The above data implies that Filipinos across age groups are still struggling to have a healthy diet. Food security is an important aspect in a healthy diet as it indicates people's physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences. Lack of access to foods can affect the diversity of foods available and how frequently individuals eat within a household per day, which can affect the diet quality.

XII. Can Filipinos afford a healthy diet?

The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that 68.6% of Filipinos, or about 75.2 million, cannot afford a healthy diet in 2020. In 2020, the average cost of a healthy diet globally is USD 3.54 per person per day [8]. The cost of a healthy diet increased from Php226.60 (USD 3.84) in 2017, Php236.04 (USD 4.00) in 2018, and Php238.9 (USD 4.05) in 2019, to Php242.53 (USD 4.11) in 2020. It is predicted that the cost of a healthy diet will continue to rise due to food prices surge in 2021, and in 2022 as well.

At present, the minimum wage rate around Metro Manila is Php570.00 for non-agriculture sectors and Php533.00 for service/retail establishments employing 15 workers or less. These rates vary depending on the area and nature of work in different industries (as of 4 June 2022) [9].

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, during the first semester of 2021, a family of five needs to have a Php12,082 income per month on average (approximately Php400.00/day per household of five members) to meet their minimum basic food and non-food needs [10]. If the cost of a healthy diet is approximately Php242.53/person, roughly, a household with five members shall have a total budget of Php1,212.650/day just for food alone to purchase and consume healthy meals alone.

Furthermore, the cost of a healthy diet may be higher for certain sub-population groups especially if there is a family or household member that is in their early childhood, adolescence and/or currently pregnant since their daily nutrient and energy needs are higher compared to other members [11]. Thus, the ability of Filipinos to afford a healthy diet could vary, but on a typical setting, the type of diet that Filipinos are consuming and the food items that they are purchasing is dependent on which wealth quintile they belong to, the amount of income that the provider/s in a household earns, and the number and current life stage of the members of the household/family.

XIII. What are the consequences when people cannot consume healthy diets?

A healthy diet is essential for good health and nutrition across the lifespan. It helps in the proper growth and development and reduces the risk of noncommunicable diseases or NCDs such as obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. However, in the absence of healthy and affordable options, people may settle for cheaper food that may be lower in nutritional value.

Research from the Department of Nutrition at Harvard School of Public Health has shown that diet quality is important to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. High-quality foods include unrefined, minimally processed foods such as vegetables and fruits, whole grains, healthy fats, and healthy sources of protein while lower-quality foods include highly processed snack foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, refined grains, refined sugar, fried foods, foods high in saturated and trans fats, and high-glycemic foods¹ such as potatoes. [12]

With the inability to afford healthier options, unhealthy diets have become the second-leading risk factor for deaths and disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs) globally and in 2017, accounted for approximately 11 million deaths and 255 million DALYs. [13]

Consumption of highly processed food and sugar-sweetened beverages can lead to weight gain, obesity, and other chronic conditions that put people at higher risk of at least 13 types of cancer, including endometrial (uterine) cancer, breast cancer in postmenopausal women, and colorectal cancer. Consumption of red and processed meat also increases the risk of colorectal cancer [14]. In the short term, an unhealthy diet also contributes to stress, tiredness, and reduced capacity to work.

With poor food choices and unhealthy eating habits, malnutrition arises. This condition happens when there is deficiency, excess, or imbalance in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients causing the body to not function properly. Malnutrition may refer to 1) undernutrition, which includes wasting (low weight-for-height), stunting (low height-for-age) and underweight (low weight-for-age), 2) micronutrient-related malnutrition, which includes micronutrient deficiencies or micronutrient excess; and overweight, obesity and diet-related noncommunicable diseases (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers).

Globally, nearly one in three people have at least one form of malnutrition, and may reach one in two by 2025, if the trend continues. [15] Around 1.9 billion adults are overweight or obese, while 462 million are underweight. Around 45% of deaths among children under 5 years of age are linked to undernutrition. [15]

In the Philippines, undernutrition is a serious problem. For nearly thirty years, there have been almost no improvements in the prevalence of undernutrition in the Philippines with one in three children (29%) younger than five years old suffering from

¹ Foods with a high glycemic index, or simple sugars, give quick burst of energy with a rise in blood sugar quickly. However, this results to feeling of tiredness and feeling of hunger.

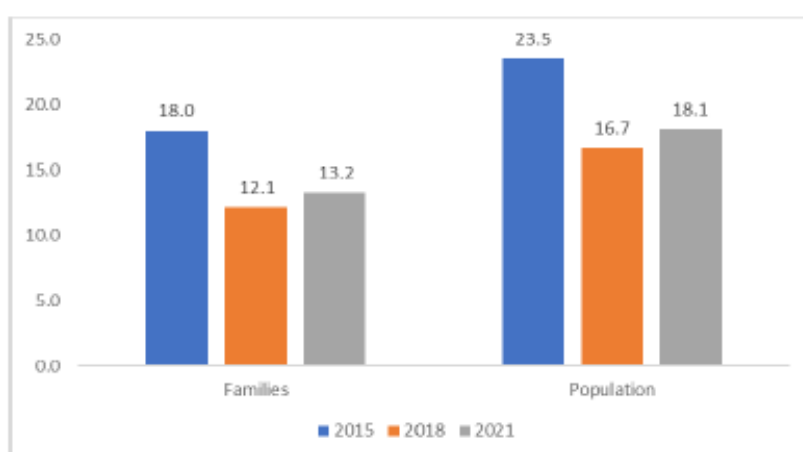
stunting (2019), being small in size for their age. [16] Based on the World Health Organization's classification of undernutrition rates, the prevalence of stunting in children in the Philippines is of "very high" public health significance.

XIV. Why are healthy diets not affordable?

Food affordability can be defined as "the capacity to pay a market price for food compared to the proportion of a household's income and other expenses." [17]

The incidence of poverty was at 18.1 percent in 2021, higher from the historic low of 16.7 in 2018. Family poverty in 2021 was higher at 13.2 percent compared to 12.1 percent in 2018. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Poverty incidence of families and of population, 2015-2021 (%)



Source: PSA (2022).

Money spent on food increases as wealth increases. The 2018-2019 National Nutrition Survey reported that household spending increases by wealth quintile of household. Table 1 shows that the richest households spend Php366 per day which is about half of what the poorest households spend which is Php181 and 44% higher than the average spending of Php253.6. [18] Note that the average spent on food for household which is Php254 is the estimated cost for a healthy diet of one person per day.

Table 1. Mean food cost of households, by major food group and wealth quintile, 2018-2019.

Food Group	All	Poorest	Poor	Middle	Rich	Richest
Cereals and cereal products	71.5	66.9	68.8	69.7	72.5	82.4
Rice and rice products	50.4	49.3	50.1	50.1	50.4	52.4
Starchy roots and tubers	2.2	1.6	1.2	1.0	2.8	4.2
Sugars and syrups	4.0	2.0	3.8	3.9	4.5	5.5
Fats and oils	5.3	3.9	4.6	5.2	6.2	7.3
Fish and fish products	42.8	32.3	28.0	43.2	47.1	58.1
Meat and meat products	37.1	14.3	24.4	37.7	49.8	62.4
Poultry	18.1	7.8	12.2	17.1	25.3	33.0

Eggs	10.4	7.4	10.6	10.7	11.2	13.0
Milk	11.1	4.8	7.3	10.0	14.5	22.1
Vegetables	26.6	22.5	24.0	25.8	28.4	34.4
Fruits	5.6	2.9	3.7	5.0	6.5	11.3
Others	18.9	14.1	27.2	19.9	17.2	32.1
Total	253.6	181.3	215.6	250.1	286.0	365.8

Source: DOST-FNRI (2022a). From Briones, R. [18]

Though it is not yet clear if the share of food expenses is high because 1) food prices are expensive relative to non-food expenditure items or 2) household income is low relative to food prices, food expenses still comprise a considerable portion of total household expenditures of Filipinos. [19]

Various research estimates that in different regions worldwide, a healthy diet is five times more expensive than a diet that meets only energy requirements. [17] Prices rise with each increase in the level of diet quality. The median cost of a nutrient-sufficient diet is two to three times higher than an energy-sufficient diet; the median cost of a healthy diet is 1.5 to 2 times higher than a nutrient adequate diet. [20]

Mbuya et. al computed the cost of a nutritious diet and compared with 2015 food expenditures (Figure 4). Despite the high cost of food, Filipino households were found to misallocate food spending. Filipinos spend more on starchy staples and meat, fish and nuts than the dietary guidelines and underspend for vegetables, fruits, milk and meat products. There is excess allocation for fats and oils. However, Filipinos still cannot afford the cost of a nutritious diet. [18]

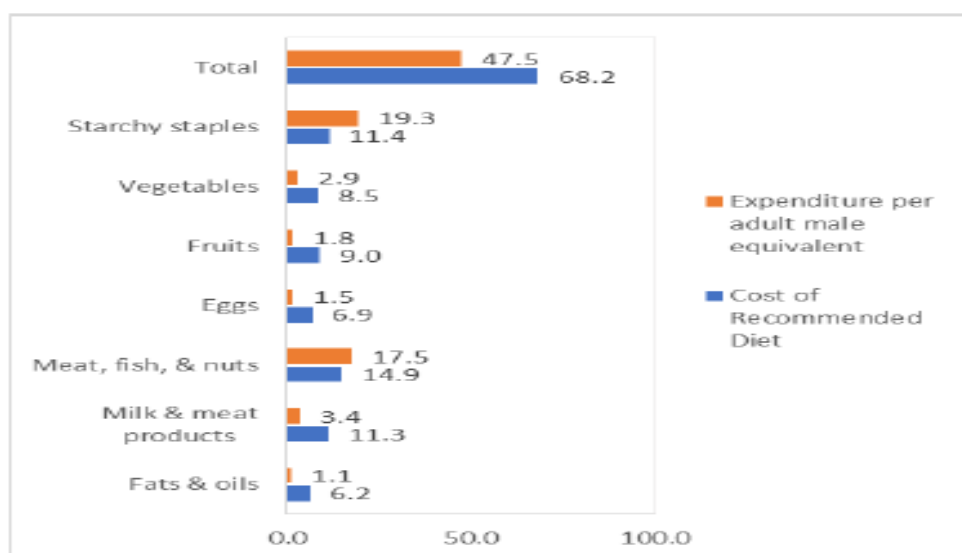


Figure 4. Daily Cost of Recommended Diet and Expenditure per Adult Male Equivalent

Source: Mbuya et al (2021) from Briones, R. [18]

Globally, food prices have increased due to the pandemic, bad weather, and rise in cost of fuel and fertilizer from 2020-2021. In the Philippines, key food items have met severe price inflation since 2021.[18] Rice prices have been increasing since 2018 but

declined in 2019 and remained stable through to 2021 mainly due to rice liberalization under Republic Act 11203. However, in 2022, overall food inflation rate reached 10% driven by high world prices of crude oils and cereals and fertilizer (Table 2).

Table 2. Annual Inflation Rate, 2019-2022 (%)

	2019	2021	2022
Rice	-4.2	-0.7	2.5
Flour, bread, bakery products	3.5	2.0	9.8
Fish	3.9	6.4	9.4
Meat	3.8	13.4	11.5
Fruits	5.2	-0.1	4.9
Vegetables	2.7	4.8	16.0
Dairy	2.4	1.1	8.7
Fats and oils	1.6	5.6	20.4
Other food	4.5	1.3	8.1
Food	1.5	4.5	9.8
All items	2.4	3.9	7.7

Note: 2022 figures are computed as the average of monthly year-on-year inflation rates for January to October.

Source: PSA (2022) (From: Briones, R., PIDS, 2022).

The World Bank has identified that the “continued focus on supporting rice production has come at the expense of other agricultural products. As a result, Filipino consumers pay a very high price for food approximately 40% higher than the regional comparators.” [21]

The food groups that contribute most of energy, protein, and micronutrient intake of Filipinos namely: Rice, Other cereals, Fish, Meat and Poultry are all produced under high levels of trade protection against cheaper imports. Consequently, the affordability of these nutrient-rich foods is reduced. Dismantling high tariffs and overly strict application of sanitary and phytosanitary standards on these consumer goods can make these food items affordable, especially to the poor. [18]

XV. What are current actions to provide an enabling environment for Filipinos to have access to more affordable healthier diets?

These are laws, policies and programs that aim to promote healthier diets and improve affordability of food. (Note that the list is not exhaustive.)

1. Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition 2023-2028 – serves as the food and nutrition policy that aims to address food insecurity and malnutrition.
2. Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 - includes as one of its goals and targets to keep food and overall prices low and stable by protecting people's purchasing power, reducing food and overall inflation to be kept to 2.5 to 4.5 percent in 2023 and 2.0 to 4.0 percent from 2024 to 2028." Under the Social and Human Development Sector, one key strategy is ensuring food security and proper nutrition through production and effective supply management.

3. Republic Act 11148 or the *Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Mag-Nanay* Act – supports healthy diets in the first 1000 days by mandating the scaling up on interventions on nutrition for mothers and babies.
4. Excise Tax on sugar-sweetened beverages under the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law -imposes higher tax on sugary drinks to generate both revenue and reduce the consumption of these beverages.
5. DOH Administrative Order No. 2021-0039 or the National Policy on the Elimination of Industrially Produced Trans-Fatty Acids for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases- seeks to eliminate industrially produced trans fatty acids (TFA) in the Philippines' food supply by 2023.
6. Food and Drug Administration Circular No. 2021-028 Guidelines for Prepackaged Processed Food Products Containing Trans-Fatty Acids (TFA) - prohibits the importation, local manufacture, distribution, use and sale of PHO, and Oils and Fats blended with PHO; Oils and Fats with TFA content more than 2g per 100g/ml of total fat; and prepackaged processed food products with PHO and high TFA content exceeding 2g per 100g/ml of total fat. The prohibition is effective 18 June 2023.
7. DOH Administrative Order 2021-0063 or the Health Promotion Framework Strategy 2030 which includes diet together with physical activity as one of the seven priority areas. All health promotion activities and programs should be anchored on the priority areas, specifically, that nutrition shall be improved through healthy diets, and physical activity shall be increased to reduce all forms of malnutrition and prevent development of non-communicable diseases.
8. Department of Education Memorandum Circular No. 13, Series of 2017 - “Policy and Guidelines on Healthy Food and Beverage Choices in Schools and in DepED Offices” issued on 14 March 2017 establishes the guidelines to promote healthy diets and positive eating behaviors and provide healthy eating environment to learners, teaching and non-teaching personnel. It introduced a system of categorizing locally available foods and drinks as a guide in selling and marketing of foods and drinks in schools and DepEd offices, including purchasing of foods for school feeding.
9. *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program - provides conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor, to improve the health, nutrition, and the education of children aged 0-18. The program has contributed to the reduction of poverty headcount, poverty gap and income inequality.
10. Department of Agriculture’s *Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita* program – increases accessibility of food supplies through ensuring that food commodities are made available straight from the small farmers and accessible in high consumer demand areas.

11. Dietary supplementation programs - provides hot meals or food packs to identified priority groups such as pregnant women, children 6-23 months, children in day care and elementary schools.
12. Food Fortification – through the Philippine Food Fortification Act or Republic Act 8976 and ASIN Law or Republic Act 8172 to ensure that staples and salt have added nutrients to address and prevent micronutrient deficiencies.
13. Nutrition Labelling – currently there is mandatory nutrition labelling requirement through the back-of-pack nutrition panel and voluntary front of pack label for energy content of packaged food products. Labelling helps consumers make healthier food choices. Efforts are ongoing to improve the current labelling system.

XVI. What are needed actions to make healthy diets more available and accessible for all Filipinos?

The Global Nutrition Report of 2021 [22] states that poor diets and malnutrition should be addressed sustainably to ensure a healthy future for all. The report also identified policy actions and investments to be considered to transform food systems worldwide towards greater affordability of healthy diets. These include repurposing policies to reduce the cost of nutritious food such as investment in nutrition-sensitive agricultural productivity and diversity, urban agriculture, no taxes for nutritious foods, reduction of food losses, food fortification and strengthening food supply chains.

The WHO and FAO [13] recommends these key actions to enable sustainable healthy diets to become available, accessible, affordable, safe, and desirable:

1. Address inequities and inequalities and consider the perspective of people who experience poverty and deprivation.
2. Promote capacity development strategies for behavior change, including consumer empowerment and effective food and nutrition education.
3. Quantify and balance the potential trade-offs to make sustainable healthy diets available, accessible, affordable, safe, and appealing for all.
4. Develop national food-based dietary guidelines that define context-specific sustainable healthy diets by considering the social, cultural, economic, ecological, and environmental circumstances.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020 Report (Transforming Food Systems for Affordable Diets) [23] summarizes the policy options and investments to be considered to transform food systems worldwide towards greater affordability of healthy diets as follows:

POLICIES AND INVESTMENTS TO REDUCE THE COST OF NUTRITIOUS FOODS

1. Investment in nutrition-sensitive agricultural productivity increases and diversification.

2. Promotion of urban and peri-urban agriculture
3. Avoiding taxation of nutritious foods
4. Investment in research, innovation, and extension
5. Policies and investment in nutrition-sensitive value chains
6. Policies and investments to reduce food losses.
7. Policies and investment in nutrition-sensitive handling and processing
8. Food fortification
9. Investment in road networks, transport, market infrastructure
10. Ensuring trade and marketing policies balance producer and consumer interests
11. Strengthening food supply chains under humanitarian conditions

CONSUMER-ORIENTED POLICIES TO ENHANCE THE AFFORDABILITY OF HEALTHY DIETS

1. Policies to reduce poverty and income inequality.
2. Strengthening nutrition-sensitive social protection mechanisms, including:
 - cash transfer programs
 - in-kind transfers/food distribution
 - school feeding programs.
3. Subsidization of nutritious foods

COMPLEMENTARY POLICIES THAT PROMOTE HEALTHY DIETS

1. Promotion of healthy food environments
2. Taxation of energy-dense foods and beverages of minimal nutritional value
3. Food industry regulations
4. Regulation of food marketing
5. Promote breastfeeding, regulate the marketing of breastmilk substitutes, and ensure access to nutritious foods by infants.
6. Policies supporting nutrition education
7. Policies in support of sustainable food consumption and food waste reduction.

In the Philippines, the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) 2023-2028 aims to reduce all form of malnutrition by enabling Filipinos to have healthier diets, better behaviors and improved access to quality services. Healthier diets will be achieved through increased availability, accessibility and affordability of nutritious foods. Affordability of food will be increased through increased supply of food, increased efficiency of food distribution, transformed market choices to nutritious foods.

XVII. What are practical ways to consume healthier diets?

1. Create a meal plan. Meal planning can help individuals and families have nutritious meals within a budget and reduce food waste. Refer to the *Pinggang Pinoy* on having the right food group proportions on a per-meal basis.
2. Cook meals at home instead of eating outside the home. This enables control of quality and quantity of ingredients such as sugar, salt, fat, and other ingredients that may have a negative effect health. Meals bought outside the home tend to be more expensive.

3. Incorporate fruits, vegetables, legumes and nuts in daily meals. Fruits bought in season are relatively less expensive. There are many vegetables that are packed in nutrients but not heavy on the wallet. Choose green leafy vegetables such as kangkong, malunggay, alugbati, camote tops, mustasa, saluyot, talinum, and non-leafy vegetables such as sigarilyas, sitaw (long beans) and okra. Legumes such as kadyos (pigeon pea), patani (lima beans) are relatively inexpensive and rich in protein.
4. Avoid buying highly processed foods and instead buy whole foods.
5. Replace meat with other proteins such as legumes, eggs, small fishes and canned fish.
6. Grow own foods at home or in communities. Having food gardens not only provide additional source of food.

XVIII. How to support the Nutrition Month campaign?

Nutrition Month encourages collective effort of all sectors to promote healthy and affordable diets for all Filipinos. Here are some ways for stakeholders to promote the key messages for Nutrition Month:

1. Review organization plans and budget and tweak to include nutrition-related activities and services;
2. Disseminate information about Nutrition Month through streamers, websites, and social media;
3. Participate in Nutrition Month activities of the NNC and other agencies;
4. Conduct webinars and online fora for the general public recognizing the importance of healthy and affordable diets;
5. Provide services to address food insecurity;
6. Conduct Nutrition Month activities related to the theme, such as activities on how to promote healthy and affordable diet.

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