



Seasoning cubes can be used sparingly as they also contain high concentrations of salt. If and when they are used as is a common practice in the country, then there should be no need to add additional salt to the food.



### Recommendation 8: "Use sugars and drinks and foods made with sugar in moderation"

This guideline highlights the inclusion of sugars and sweetened drinks as they are potentially a major contributor of sugar intake

Sugar in the diet comes from several sources; these include some s, most types of fruits and processed sugar which is added to drinks, cakes, sweets and drinks.

Intake of added sugars in the diet - i.e. processed foods e.g. soft drinks such as carbonated drinks, sweets, ice cream, jams, biscuits, chocolate, cakes, home-made fruit juice and tea should be minimised.

### Recommendation 9: Take 8-10 glasses of water daily



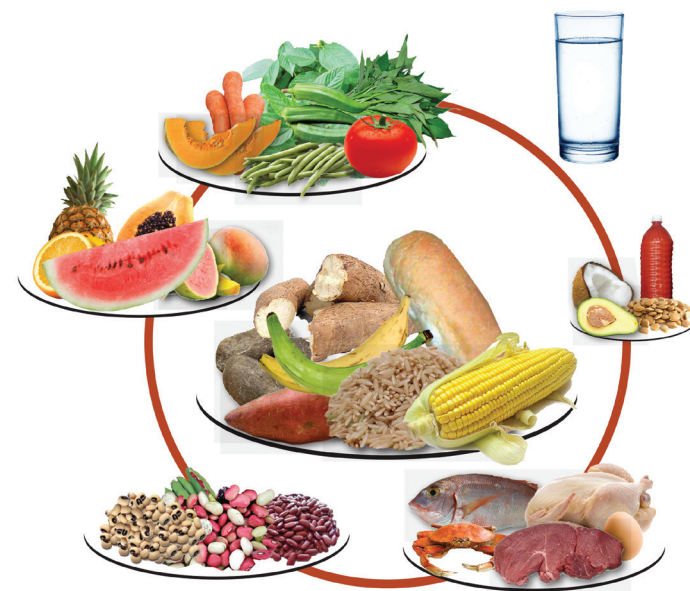
People can live without food for some time, but will die if they do not have water. When a person does not drink enough water, their body will become dry inside, this is called dehydration. Feeling thirsty is a signal that the body is already dehydrated. Ideally, 8-10 glasses of water is needed per day for adults

### Recommendation 10: Be physically active

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things individuals can do to improve their health and wellbeing during all the stages of the lifespan. Establishing and maintaining a regular physical activity pattern can provide many health benefits e.g. it helps in maintenance of a healthy body weight thus preventing excessive weight gain; Strong evidence shows that regular physical activity lowers the risk of early death, coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and breast cancer. People can engage in regular physical activities and exercises that they enjoy.



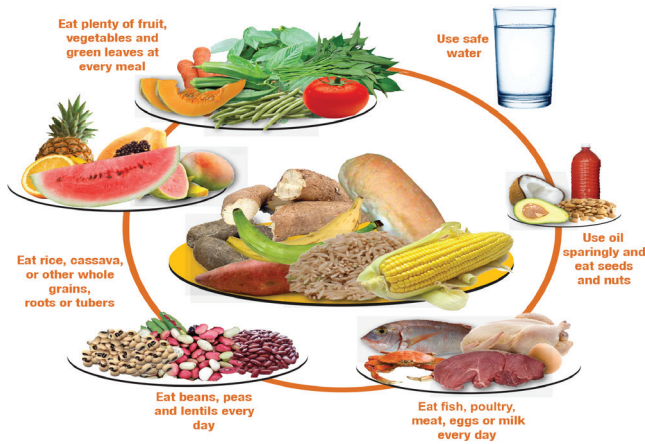
## THE SIERRA LEONE DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY EATING



# THE SIERRA LEONE DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY EATING

The Sierra Leonean Food Based Dietary Guidelines are designed to help Sierra Leoneans to consume a healthy, nutritionally adequate diet that will lead to improved nutritional status. The FBDGs is an empowering tool that helps the general public to make healthy food choices and healthy consumption patterns.

It cautions on eating patterns that are counterproductive to health and well-being. In its totality the food based dietary guideline has made recommendations that are presented in form of key messages. 10 key recommendations have been identified as critical to improving health and nutritional status of the general public. A healthy eating pattern for Sierra Leoneans includes 6 food groups as shown in the Food Guide below:



## Key Recommendation 1: Eat variety of food

Varied foods should be chosen within and across all the food groups. This is because no single food contains all the nutrients in the right quality and quantity. Variety also contributes to absorption and retention of nutrients e.g. a variety of vegetables ranging from dark green, red, orange; legumes; whole grain staples; fruits especially whole fruits and variety of protein foods (e.g. meat, fish, poultry and oils)



## 2: “Eat either fish, poultry, meat, milk & eggs everyday”



The dietary guideline recommends consumption of a broad range of foods from both animal and plant sources and includes fish (seafood's); meats, poultry, and eggs. Fish is recognised as one of the best sources of proteins. The flesh of fish protein is easily digested and absorbable while fish are the highest source of Omega 3 fatty acids which are friendly and vital for brain development. Protein from animal based foods contains all the essential amino acid and, in the right proportions. The guideline further recommends intake of iron rich foods e.g. heme iron derived from red meat, poultry and fish although non heme iron obtained from leafy vegetables and legumes are also recommended. Use of processed foods, including meats is not recommended by these dietary guidelines

## Recommendation 3: “Eat rice, cassava, other whole grains, roots or tubers as part of meals

There is an apparent overdependence on rice in Sierra Leone. Available staples in the country includes: cassava and cassava products e.g. gari, fufu; rice, maize, wheat flour, bread, yams, sweet potatoes and plantain. Grains often make up the largest part of the meal. For best practice, the dietary guideline recommends consumption of whole grains. Wholegrain cereals (e.g. parboiled rice, millet and sorghum) are also sources of protein, fibre and some micronutrients. In Sierra Leone, parboiled rice is an example of wholegrain cereal.



Foods from this food group should be served with foods from other food groups so as to improve dietary variety and hence dietary adequacy.



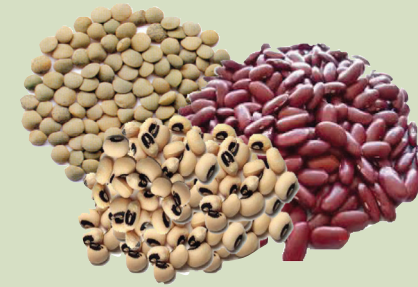
## Recommendation 4: “Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables especially green leaves at every meal”

The aim of this recommendation is to encourage the Sierra Leonean population to recognise the essential role of foods from this group



On the whole, vegetables and green leaves are more micronutrient dense and thus their promotion in dietary guidelines is important. Foods in this group are categorised in terms of those that are rich in vitamin A (beta carotene) and those that are rich in other micronutrients. Dark green leafy vegetables, yellow and orange vegetables and fruits are important contributors of beta-carotene in the diet.

## Recommendation 5: Eat either beans, peas and lentils everyday



These food groups are categorised under pulses. Pulses include lentils, beans, peas and chickpeas and are a critical part of the food basket. This food group is well known for its contribution on protein intake

## Recommendation 6: “Use oil in moderation and eat seeds and nuts

This guideline recommends adequate intake of fats and oils but cautions against overconsumption of fats and oils, a dietary habit that can contribute to obesity and Non Communicable Diseases. These foods are essential in the diet but when people eat too much oil (or fat from animal foods) they are at risk of gaining too much weight. High intake of fats and oils also increases their risk of having high levels of fat in the blood, which can cause heart disease.



## Recommendation 7: “Use iodized salt but use it in moderation

Many people eat more salt than their bodies need. This can pose a health risk as it may lead to high blood pressure, which can cause stroke or a heart attack. It's therefore recommended that one should use a little salt when preparing food and no extra salt added after cooking or during eating.