

Role of Dietitians in the fight against COVID-19

Background

- Dietitians are the clinical nutrition experts. specifically trained to support the nutrition and hydration needs of acutely and chronically ill people with a wide range of conditions and to monitor the nutritional status of populations at risk, including older adults and people with food insecurity.
- This briefing outlines the core role that dietitians are playing at AIIMS, New Delhi in the response to COVID-19, from the frontline in acute care to population level advice and support in acute community care, primary care, food service and education.



Supporting Vulnerable People with Technology

- Patients with pre-existing health conditions, such as malnutrition, cancer, obesity, diabetes, food allergy and eating disorders to name but a few, were supported, even if the COVID-19 lockdown made it more difficult to access it as they normally would.
- Video conferencing and specialist apps are used to provide consultations and support to patients who need them.



Critical Care Nutrition in COVID-19

- Most patients in the intensive care unit (ICU) with COVID-19 are sedated, ventilated and will have nutrition, hydration and medications delivered through feeding tubes. Feeding tubes are used to deliver the protein and calories required to meet the demands on the body. In some cases, nutrition and hydration will be delivered directly into the vein.
- Patients in ICU, can experience malnutrition, changes in eating patterns, loss of sense of taste and smell and have a poor appetite before, during and after critical illness which can directly impact on recovery and rehabilitation.



Nutrition For Adults

Eat fresh and unprocessed food-

- A variety of fruits and vegetables, herbs and spices, legumes (e.g. lentils, beans), nuts, whole grains and foods from animal sources(e.g. Lean meat, fish, eggs and milk) Should be consumed



Drink enough water

- Drink 8-10 glasses water everyday. Water is the best choice but you can also consume other drinks for example soup, lemon juice, tea.



Eat moderate amounts of fat and oil

- Avoid industrially produced trans fat. These are often found in processed food, fast food, snack food, fried food, frozen pizza, pies, cookies, cake, pastry, patty and spreads.



Eat less salt and sugar

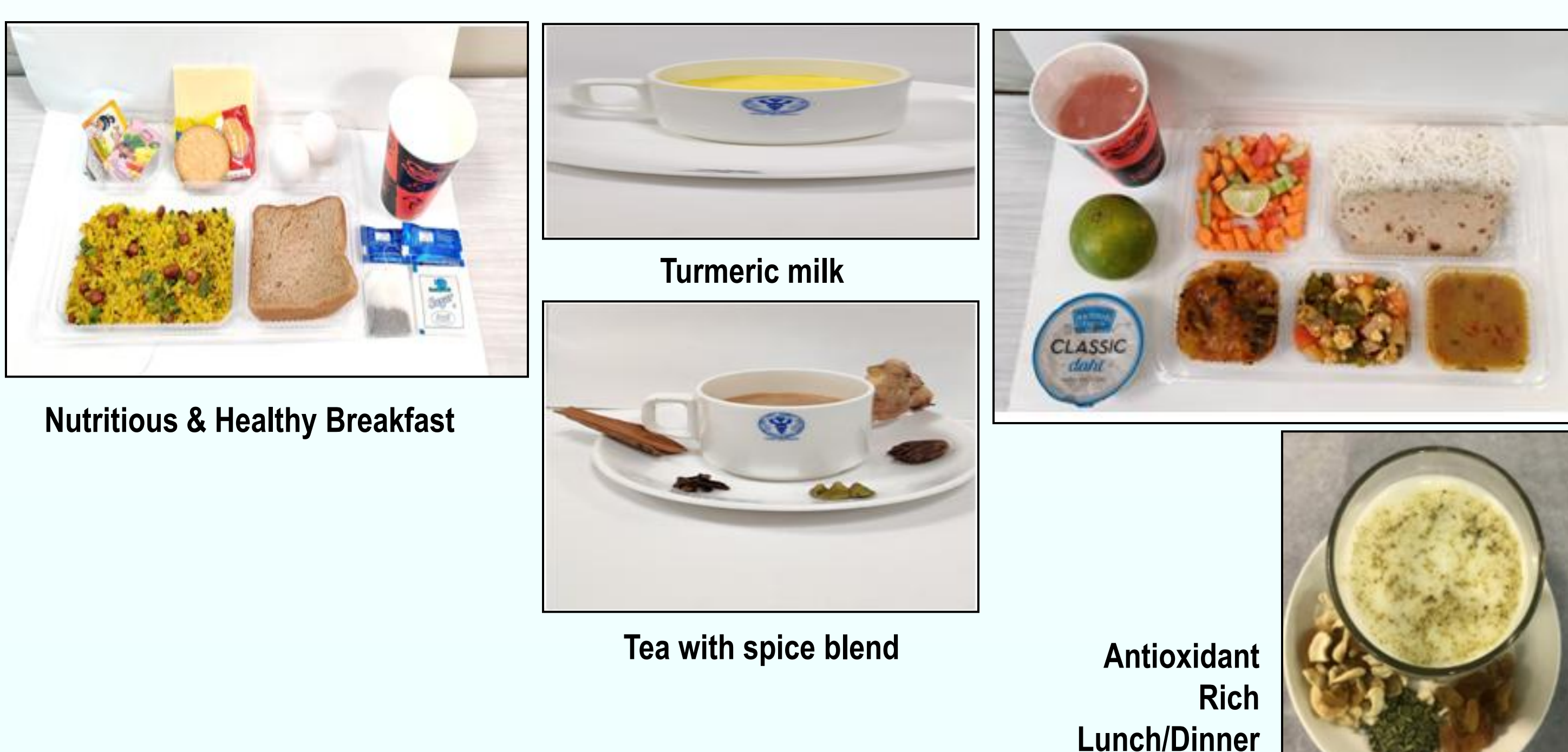
- Limit your daily salt intake to less than 5gm(1teaspoon)

Avoid food that are high in salt and sugar

Avoid eating out

Helping Patient's Get Back on Feet with Immunity Boosters

- Hospitalized COVID-19 patients are at increased risk of malnutrition and are likely to suffer loss of muscle during their stay. Nutrient rich, fortified, tasty foods or specialized nutrition supplements are provided to indoor hospitalized patients to help regain the weigh and muscle that may have been lost.
- Even when people are well enough to leave hospital after COVID-19, their journey is not over. Dietitians have an important role to play in rehabilitation, reducing risk of complications and shortening recovery times.



Nutrition for Health Care Staff



Call to Action

- Everyone should continue to follow WHO, ICMR and Government of India advice such as remaining at home and social distancing, alongside meticulous hand-hygiene.
- Diet and lifestyle measures are not a substitute for current public health advice, but we hope that this briefing will help dietitians, health professionals, health caterers, policymakers and members of the public to optimize nutrition for everyone as we wait for the COVID-19 pandemic to pass.

