



healthy food

you are part of it ! ...

Seafarers' Health Information Programme

Healthier, fitter, safer ...

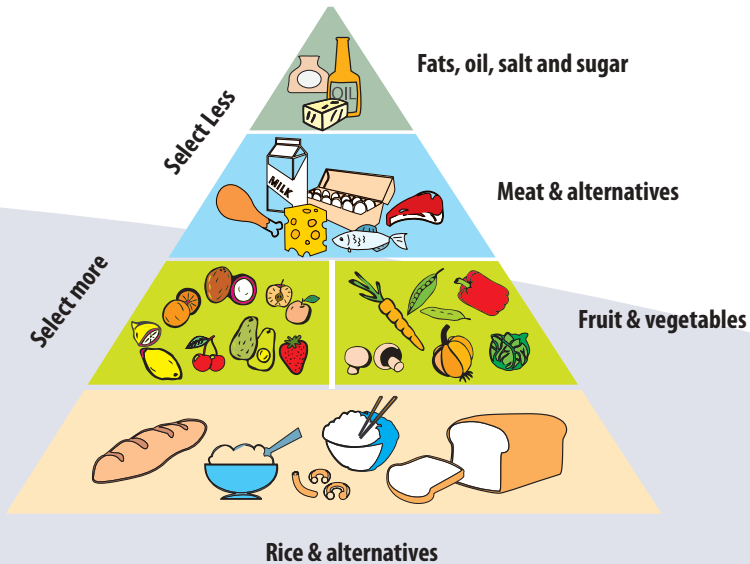




It is vital that you look after your own health and wellbeing at sea and ashore. Make healthy, nutritious food choices and ensure a balanced diet consisting of carbohydrates, protein, fat and fibre, vitamins and minerals with minimum levels of salt, fat and sugar.

Proper nutrition, along with adequate rest and sleep, regular exercise and good hygiene help to prevent diseases and improve health overall.

Access to healthy food options and variation are cornerstones of healthy food onboard.



Healthy Food pyramid !

There should be sufficient protein for the formation and repair of body tissues, adequate supply of minerals to reinforce body tissues, sufficient carbohydrates and the right amount of fats for energy and vitamins to keep the brain, nerves and other vital organs functioning.

- Eat a variety of foods or a varied diet, balance is the key message
- Eat plenty of fruit (3 servings / day), vegetables (300 g / day) and potatoes (3-5 / day): choose more dark green and bright coloured vegetables and orange fruits
- Reduce the amount of meat (+/- 100 g / day), fat (< 35%), oil, sugar and salt you eat
- Drink plenty of safe drinking water (> 1.5 litres / day or 6 to 8 glasses / day)



Breakfast !

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, delivering 20-25% of the total energy for that day.

- Breakfast prevents loss of concentration and dexterity during the morning
- Carbohydrates found a lot in bread, grain products, rice and pasta are excellent sources of energy: choose higher fibre, whole grain options
- Skimmed and half-fat milk and milk products are good sources of proteins at breakfast
- Fruit should be eaten several times per day, it is a good idea to start the day, with fruit or 100% fruit juice

Food, Shift work and Watchkeeping !

Bad eating habits during periods of shift work or watchkeeping, can lead to sleeping problems, nausea, digestive problems, problems in staying awake, greater chances of becoming overweight and cardiovascular problems.

- Light meals are the best idea : soups, salads and lean meat
- At the beginning of the shift, eat protein rich food such a skimmed and half-fat milk, yoghurt and lean meat. These give a slower and steady release of energy.
- Later on in the shift eat carbohydrate such as bread, potatoes, salad, pasta salad, fruit and whole grains. These help you to sleep better.

Try to avoid

- **Spicy food**
- **Fried and fat food**
- **Sweets**
- **Caffeine**



Caffeine !

Not more than 3 cups per shift

- Coffee (75 mg / cup), tea (30 mg / cup) and soft drinks like Coca Cola (23 mg), energy drinks and even some sports drinks contain varied levels of caffeine up to 80 mg / unit
- More than 400 mg of caffeine / day is not good for you
- Caffeine stimulates the short term memory but this does not lead to better physical performance
- Too much caffeine has side effects such as tension (stress), restlessness, trembling, insomnia, headaches and heart palpitations





Fibre

A healthy fibre content in your diet can be achieved by eating more whole grains, whole fruits and vegetables. Much of the fibre is in the peel. Nearly all varieties of beans are a rich source of fibre. Spinach and romaine lettuce are healthy choices. Try to eat 25 to 35 grams of fibre each day (equivalent to a small plate).

- Fibre is filling without being fattening
- Fibre slows fat absorption
- Fibre reduces cholesterol
- Fibre helps prevent constipation
- Fibre protects against colon cancer
- Fibre makes blood sugars more stable

Sweets, snacks, fats and sugar

If shift patterns prevent eating at regular mealtimes, try and avoid snacking on sweets, biscuits, crisps etc.

- Sweets, snacks and some processed foods contain large quantities of fat and sugar and contribute to weight problems and more serious health issues like heart diseases
- Avoid eating foods such as biscuits, cakes, chocolate, crisps and chips every day
- Fat used in cooking, and spreads, should be used sparingly
- Choose healthy alternatives such as fruit, yoghurt or a glass of skimmed or half-fat milk



Working in extreme heat

Salt and fluid supplements

Adjustment to heat, under normal circumstances, usually takes about 5 to 7 days, during which time the body will undergo a series of changes that will make continued exposure to heat more endurable.

Seafarers used to working in the heat, sweat more “efficiently”. In other words they sweat sooner and sweat more, but lose less salt in the process. Whereas seafarers not used to working in the heat, lose more salt in their sweat.

A little extra salt in food may help but salt tablets are not a good idea because the salt does not enter the body system as fast as water or other fluids.

Seafarers exposed to very hot conditions in his working environment should drink 150 to 200 g of fluids every 15 or 20 minutes.

Water must be palatable and readily available to the seafarer. Individual drinking cups should be provided.



Don't forget

- Always wash your hands after using the toilet and always before you eat
- Try and exercise 30 minutes / day
- Watch your weight
- Make healthy choices

Ship has also produced 7 articles on healthy food :

"Potatoes and Cereal products",

"Fruit and Vegetables",

"Dairy products and calcium-enriched soya products",

"Spreads and cooking fats",

"Meat, fish, eggs and substitutes",

"Water"

and "Other Foods".

These articles can be read on our website www.seafarershealth.org and click on the TOPIC "**HEALTHY FOOD**".



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