Public Access to Health Information
Nutrition for Good Health
A library programme on nutrition

• Information on nutrition is already likely to be in the library in the form of cookery books. These make an important contribution.

• The essential facts on good diet for babies, growing children and old people need to be reinforced.

• Sources of information and advice can be highlighted by the library.
The role of tradition

• Nutrition is an area in which traditional knowledge is almost always right.
• When people were dependent on their own gardens, fields and flocks they usually chose a good diet with a healthy balance of locally available vegetable and animal foods.
• In contrast, the modern diet is influenced by advertising, processed foods and unhealthy levels of salt, sugar and other flavour-giving substances.
Feeding babies

• The message that there is no real substitute for mother’s milk needs to be reinforced.
  – It not only provides the right kind of nourishment, but
  – It protects against infections, and
  – Contributes to good family spacing.

• The library can contribute to programmes to support and encourage breast-feeding and discourage the use of commercially made formulas.

• Mother and baby clubs are a good way to do this.
NUTRITION AND NOURISHMENT for CHILDREN UNDER TWO YEARS OLD
Feeding growing children

• There is an important set of messages to be communicated to parents and children
• Exercise and good diet are both vital for growing children and were part of traditional village life.
• In the cities children may
  – Miss meals
  – Try to counter the effects of lack of exercise through eating less, or the wrong things
  – Develop a taste for commercial fast food and pre-prepared foods
  – Reject the healthy traditional foods as old fashioned.
• Parents need information and support on child nutrition.
Nutrition for old people

- Old people tend to neglect their diet, but they need
  - Plenty of protein (from meat, fish, beans) and
  - Less Carbohydrate (from bread, porridge etc).
  - Plenty of fruit and vegetables for roughage, and for vitamins and minerals
  - Less salt and plenty of water.
Environment and healthy eating

• Good food ingredients are important, but sanitation, and clean water supply are also vital.
• Contamination of wells and other water sources can be because of bad hygienic habits.
• Rubbish and human and animal excrement near water supply sources must be avoided.
• Good water means less danger of diarrhea and other water borne conditions, with important improvements in child mortality rates.
A library nutrition campaign

• The library needs to make sure it stocks good information materials on nutrition and health.
• Encouraging recognition of traditional farming, gardening and food collecting practices could be done through cooperation with local farmers.
• Cookery books can make a good contribution and the library could encourage cookery clubs and contests.
• Food education for young children is important and simple cookery lessons, using traditional recipes, could form part of the activities of a children’s learning group.