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## Dietary pattern of vegetarian and non-vegetarian pre-school children

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### ABSTRACT

Childhood nutrition has a significant influence on health and development throughout the life. The aim of this study was to assess the dietary pattern of vegetarian and non-vegetarian pre-school children. The sample were taken at random, from both the groups that is vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Nutrient intake was recorded using 7 days dietary records. Children of non-vegetarian families consumed less milk, toffy, chowmin, burger, jam and fried food than the children of vegetarian families.

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**Key words :** Pre-school children, Dietary pattern, Nutrient intake

### INTRODUCTION

The traditional Indian dietary consists of cereal preparations, such as rice, chapati, roti, as the main course, with preparations of dal, legumes, vegetables, dahi/buttermilk, as accompaniments to the staple food. It is good to remember that there are two distinct patterns of non-vegetarian diet observed around the world. The first is the Indian non-vegetarian pattern, which has a cereals preparation as a main course with fish, poultry or meat dish as an accompaniment, in addition to vegetables, dal/pulse preparation and salad.

The second non-vegetarian pattern is that which is followed in the western countries such as U.K., U.S.A., Canada and Europe, which has meat, fish or poultry dish as the main course, with preparation of cereals, vegetables, fruits, an accompaniments to the main protein course. In such a meal, the animal foods such as chicken, fish or meat roast form the main course in each meal and thus are eaten at least twice a day.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Vegetarian and non-vegetarian pre-school children from 2 to 6 years were selected from Kanpur city. To conduct the study, a sample size of 100 was taken, in which 50 of the respondents were vegetarian and rest 50 were

non-vegetarian pre-school children. The samples were taken at random from both the groups that is vegetarian and non-vegetarian. The information was obtained from the respondents mother by questionnaire-cum interview methods.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that in non-vegetarian group, maximum (52.0 per cent) children consumed snacks twice in a day, 26.0 per cent once in a day, 22.0 per cent thrice in a day, whereas in vegetarian group maximum (60.0 per cent) children consumed snacks twice in a day, 24.0 per cent once in a day and 16.0 per cent thrice in a day.

**Table 1 : Consumption of snacks by the respondents**

Snack consumption	Non-vegetarian pre-school children		Vegetarian pre-school children	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Once	13	26.0	12	24.0
Twice	26	52.0	30	60.0
Thrice	11	22.0	8	16.0
Total	50	100.0	50	100.0

Table 2 shows that in the non-vegetarian group, 76.0 per cent were taking 4 meals a day followed by 24.0 per

**Table 2 : Distribution of respondents on the basis of frequency of meals**

Frequency of meal consumption	Non-vegetarian pre-school children		Vegetarian pre-school children	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
2 Meals	12	24.0	10	20.0
3 Meals	-	-	7	14.0
4 Meals	38	76.0	33	66.0
Total	50	100.0	50	100.0

cent 2 meals per day, while in vegetarian group, maximum (66.0 per cent) were taking more than 3 meals a day followed by 14.0 per cent 3 meals a day and 20.0 per cent 2 meals a day.

Table 3 shows that in non-vegetarian group, maximum (40.0 per cent) children consumed fried foods, 18.0 per cent consumed spicy foods, 30.0 per cent consumed sweet food and 12.0 per cent salty foods, while in vegetarian group, maximum (50.0 per cent) consumed fried food. 44.0 per cent consumed sweet foods and 6.0 per cent consumed salty foods.

**Table 3 : Distribution of respondents on the basis of types of food consumed**

Type of food consumed	Non-vegetarian pre-school children		Vegetarian pre-school children	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Fried food	20	40.0	25	50.0
Spicy food	9	18.0	-	-
Sweet food	15	30.0	22	44.0
Salty food	6	12.0	3	6.0
Total	50	100.0	50	100.0

Table 4 shows that in non-vegetarian group, 20.0 per cent consumed 1 glass milk in a day, 40.0 per cent consumed 2 glass milk a day, 34.0 per cent consumed 3 glass per day and 6.0 per cent respondents consumed more than 3 glass milk in a day, whereas in vegetarian group, 22.0 per cent consumed 1 glass in a day, 24.0 per cent respondents consumed 2 glass milk per day, 36.0 per cent consumed 3 glass milk a day and 18.0 per cent consumed more than 3 glass milk in a day.

**Table 4 : Distribution of respondents on the basis of frequency of milk consumption**

Milk consumption	Non-vegetarian pre-school children		Vegetarian pre-school children	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
1 Glass	10	20.0	11	22.0
2 Glasses	20	40.0	12	24.0
3 Glasses	17	34.0	18	36.0
More	3	6.0	9	18.0
Total	50	100.0	50	100.0

**Conclusion:**

It may be concluded that frequency of meal consumption was higher in non-vegetarian children in comparison to vegetarian children. In the assessment, snacks consumption was higher among non-vegetarian children in comparison to vegetarian children. Children of non-vegetarian families consumed less milk, toffy, chowmin, burger, jam and fried food than children by vegetarian families.

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