Terms

Allergic reaction: Immunologically induced tissue response to a foreign substance (allergen).

Alpha-linolenic acid: 18 carbon fatty acid with three double bonds; the first double bond is on the third carbon atom from the methyl end and therefore it is called n-3 fatty acid. It is abbreviated as 18: 3 n-3.

Amino acid: The fundamental building block of proteins.

Anabolism: Process by which complex materials in tissues and organs are built up from simple substances.

Antioxidants: A group of substances that prevent the damage caused by the oxidation of fatty acids and proteins by oxygen free radicals.

Balanced Diet: A diet containing all essential (macro and micro) nutrients in optimum quantities and in appropriate proportions that meet the requirements.

Beta-Carotene: A yellow - orange plant pigment which yields vitamin A by oxidation in the body.

Bifidus factor: A substance in human milk which stimulates the growth of a micro-organism (Lactobacillus bifidus) in the infants' intestine.

Body Mass Index: Body weight in relation to height. Body weight in kilograms divided by 2 height in metres .

Calorie: Unit used to indicate the energy value of foods. Quantitative requirements are expressed in terms of energy, i.e., kilocalories (Kcals). Newer unit for energy is Kjoules.

Catabolism: Process of breakdown of complex organic constituents in the body.

Cholesterol: A lipid constituent of blood and tissues derived from diet as well as from synthesis within the body.

Colostrum: The milk produced by mammals during the first few days after delivery.

CU: Consumption Unit. - One unit represents Recommended Dietary Allowance of energy for a sedentary man.

Empty calories: Term used for foods that provide only energy without any other nutrient, eg. white sugar and alcohol.

Enzymes: Biological catalysts which enhance the rate of chemical reactions in the body.

Essential fatty acids (EFA): Fatty acids like linoleic acid and alpha linolenic acid which are not made in the human body and must be supplied through the diet.

Fatty acids: Fundamental constituents of many lipids.

Fibre: Collective term for the structural parts of plant tissues which are resistant to the human digestive enzymes.

Flavonoids: Pigments widely distributed in nature in flowers, fruits and vegetables.

Terms (cont)

Food Exchange: Foods are classified into different groups for exchange. Each “exchange list” includes a number of measured foods of similar nutritive value that can be substituted inter-changeably in meal plans.

Free radicals: Highly reactive oxygen-derived species formed in the body during normal metabolic processes. They have the capacity to damage cellular components by oxidation.

High-density lipoproteins (HDL): These transport cholesterol from the extra-hepatic tissues to the liver. They are anti-atherogenic.

Hormones: Substances produced by a gland (endocrine) which are secreted directly into the blood stream to produce a specific effect on another organ.

Terms

Hyperlipidemia: An increase in the concentration of blood lipids (triglycerides and cholesterol).

Invisible fats: Fat present as an integral component of plant and animal foods such as in cereals, legumes and spices.

Lactoferrin: Minor protein of milk containing iron.

Lactose intolerance: Disorder resulting from improper digestion of milk sugar called lactose, due to lack of an enzyme, lactase, in the intestinal mucosa.

Linoleic acid: Fatty acid containing 18 carbon atoms and two double bonds. The first double bond is on the sixth carbon atom from the methyl end. Therefore it is called n-6 fatty acid and is abbrev-iated as 18:2 n-6.

Lipids: A technical term for fats. They are important dietary consti-tuents. The group includes triglycerides, steroids, cholesterol and other complex lipids.

Lipoproteins: Lipids are not soluble in blood; they are therefore transported as lipid and protein complexes.

Low-density lipoproteins (LDL): These transport cholesterol from the liver to tissues. High blood levels indicate that more cholesterol is being transported to tissues.

Macrocytic anaemia: Anaemia characterized by red blood cells which are larger than normal.

Macronutrients: Nutrients like carbohydrates, proteins and fats which are required in large quantities.

Metabolism: Includes catabolism and anabolism.

Microcytic anaemia: Anaemia characterized by red blood cells which are smaller than normal.

Micronutrients: Nutrients which are required in small quantities, such as vitamins and trace elements.

Monounsaturated fatty acids: Unsaturated fatty acids with one double bond.

Terms (cont)

n-6 PUFA: Linoleic acid and its longer chain polyunsaturated fatty acids are collectively called n-6 PUFA.
n-3 PUFA: Alpha-linolenic acid and its longer-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids are collectively called n-3 PUFA.
Phytochemicals: General name for chemicals present in plants.
Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA): Unsaturated fatty acids with two or more double bonds.
Processed foods: Foods that are produced by converting raw food materials into a form suitable for eating.
Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM): A marked dietary deficiency of both energy and protein resulting in undernutrition.
Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA): The amounts of dietary energy and nutrients considered sufficient for maintaining good health by the people of a country.
Refined foods: Foods which have been processed to improve their appearance, colour, taste, odour or keeping quality.
Saturated fatty acids: Fatty acids containing maximum number of hydrogen atoms that each carbon atom can carry. They do not have double bonds.
Satiety: Feeling of satisfaction after food intake.
Trans-fatty acids: Are mainly produced during hydrogenation of oils; a few also occur naturally in very small quantities.
Triglycerides (Neutral fat): The major type of dietary fat and the principal form in which energy is stored in the body. A complex of fatty acids and glycerol.
Unsaturated fatty acids: Fatty acids in which there is a shortage of hydrogen atoms. The carbon atoms then become linked by double bonds. Unsaturated fatty acids are less stable than saturated fatty acids.
Visible fats: Fats and oils that can be used directly or in cooking.
Weaning foods: Foods which are used during gradual transition of the infant from breastfeeding to a normal diet.

Source: Dietary Guidelines for Indians by National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad