

## HANDOUT 5.1. CRITICAL NUTRITION PRACTICES, SUPPORTING MESSAGES AND EXPLANATIONS

Critical Nutrition Practice	Key message	Explanation of the message
1. Have periodic nutrition assessments done (especially weight).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you have HIV-related symptoms, get weighed every month.</li> <li>If you do not have HIV-related symptoms, get weighed every 3 months.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintentional weight loss or gain may imply poor health and may lead to hospitalization.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep a record of your weight in a book or on a weight chart.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This allows you to track your weight change and take action early if there are problems.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek clinical care if you lose more than 6 kg of weight in 2 or 3 months.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Such quick weight loss indicates poor health or eating habits.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When possible, ask the health provider to calculate your body mass index (BMI).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BMI under 18.5 indicates nutrition risk.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>2. Increase energy intake by eating a variety of foods, especially energy-rich foods. Increase the frequency of meals, especially if you are sick.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat locally available and affordable foods from each food group to develop a varied diet and increase energy intake.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PLWHA need to consume more energy every day than people of the same age, sex and physical activity who are not infected with HIV to make sure the body gets all the nutrients its needs.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat five times a day (three meals and two snacks in a day).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because HIV affects digestion and absorption, you need to eat small meals often, especially when you are sick, to get the amount of energy your body needs.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat foods from the different food groups at each meal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staple foods give energy, body-building foods build muscle and give strength, and fruits and vegetables strengthen immunity.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrich meals with energy-dense foods such as groundnut paste, oil or fat, sugar or honey or milk powder.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most staple foods are low in energy and nutrient density and therefore need to be enriched or fortified.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat supplementary foods that contain high levels of energy, protein and micro-nutrients, such as corn-soy blend, where they are available and affordable.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have no appetite or are not eating enough, ask caregivers to help obtain and prepare food and help you eat.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Drink plenty of clean and safe (boiled or treated) water.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink about 8 glasses of clean, safe water a day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drinking unclean, unboiled water increases the risk of opportunistic infections in PLWHA, whose immune systems are weak, and can lead to severe diarrhoea and hence weight loss.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boil or treat drinking water.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have enough clean, safe drinking water in the home at all times for drinking and taking medicine.</li> </ul>	

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<b>4. Live positively and practice a healthy lifestyle by avoiding risky behaviours.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice safer sex (ask the community health worker or health care provider for condoms if needed).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsafe sex practices can lead to re-infection with HIV and hasten progression of HIV to AIDS. It is important to avoid infecting others.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid alcohol, especially if taking medicines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alcohol interferes with digestion, absorption, storage and utilization of food and nutrients.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid smoking cigarettes and taking non-prescription drugs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smoking interferes with appetite and increases the risk of cancer and respiratory infections, particularly tuberculosis.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid eating junk foods such as chips and sodas and sugary foods such as cake and candy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most sweetened, coloured drinks sold in shops contain water, sugar, food colour and artificial flavour—they are not fruit juice.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek help to manage depression and stress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stress and depression may interfere with appetite and hence food intake.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get enough rest.</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Maintain high levels of hygiene and sanitation.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash your hands with water and soap after using the toilet or helping children to use the toilet and before handling and preparing food to avoid infection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLWHA can easily get infections. It's very important to prevent illness when your immune system is weak.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be careful when buying ready-to-eat foods which may be handled and prepared in unhygienic environments and contaminated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diarrhoea affects digestion and absorption of food and sheds essential nutrients.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Get physical activity (exercise).</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercise regularly to strengthen and build your muscles, improve your appetite, manage stress, and improve your overall health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular physical exercise makes people more alert, relieves stress, stimulates appetite and strengthens and builds lean muscles.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercise can include doing household chores, gardening, walking or running.</li> </ul>	

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7. <b>Seek early treatment of infections and use dietary practices to manage symptoms when possible.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek immediate clinical help to manage illness.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform your clinician of any traditional remedies or other nutritional supplements you are taking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some supplements make false claims through aggressive advertising. Always seek advice from a health professional about taking supplements.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage HIV-related symptoms such as nausea and vomiting or appetite loss through dietary practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nutrition supplements should not replace food and do not treat HIV and AIDS.</li> </ul>
8. <b>Manage food and drug interactions or drug side effects.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask your community health worker to help you make a drug-food schedule that tells you when to take your medicines in relation to meal times. Ask someone to help you stick to the schedule.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some drugs need to be taken with food, some on an empty stomach and some with or without food.</li> <li>Some drugs interact with other foods, which may make them work better or not as well</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask about side-effects that are likely to result from the drugs you are taking and learn dietary approaches to manage them.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always take your medicines according to the schedule and dosages the doctor gives you.</li> </ul>	