

Systems Thinking for a  
Sustainable Food System Booklet Series

# Healthy Diet



2



# Foreword

---

Healthy diets are not only beneficial to our health. With systems thinking, healthy diets can also affect the balance of nature and drive the local economy.

In addressing the various food issues around us, adopting a healthy diet can be a part of the solution. Interestingly, we have a significant amount of control over our own healthy eating habits, allowing us to take individual actions. If we then come together and unite in collective action, a powerful movement can be formed that has the potential to greatly influence the entire food system.

Systemic solutions to address food issues need to be implemented to prevent new and more serious problems in the future. Healthy diet is a part of this systemic solution.

Koalisi Sistem Pangan Lestari (KSPL), part of Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU), has produced this booklet to invite readers to apply systems thinking not only in looking at food issues, but also in finding solutions. This booklet is a part of the Systems Thinking for a Sustainable Food System Booklet Series, which consists of five volumes:

**Volume 1:** Understanding the Food System and the Systems Thinking Framework

**Volume 2:** Healthy Diet

**Volume 3:** Agroecology

**Volume 4:** Reducing Food Loss and Waste

**Volume 5:** Environmental Sustainability within the Food System Framework

This booklet, Volume 2, is divided into three sections. The first section begins with an introduction to healthy diet. In this section, readers can learn about what comprises healthy diets.

The second section of this booklet discusses the relationship between healthy diet and the food system. Readers can see the extent of the interconnections between healthy diet and the food system.

The third section of this booklet discusses the steps that can be taken in implementing healthy diet. Readers will learn various small steps that can be taken to apply healthy diet in their daily lives.

This booklet draws on training materials on systems thinking for a sustainable food system and other relevant literature. KSPL would like to express our gratitude to all those who have assisted in the publication of this booklet.

We understand that this booklet may not be perfect and there is always room for improvement. We welcome any feedback or constructive criticism that can help us enhance the quality of this booklet in the future.

Ultimately, we hope for this booklet to be a valuable resource for readers who are interested in learning about the application of systems thinking in building a sustainable food system.

Jakarta, January 2023

# I. Understanding Healthy Diet

---

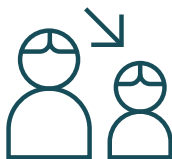
Perhaps we have read or seen news in the mass media about hunger in certain regions. People who are suffering from hunger usually show physical signs. However, we also have hidden hunger, which is not immediately visible physically.

## So, what is hidden hunger?

Malnutrition is a type of hidden hunger<sup>1</sup>, which occurs when nutrient intake does not meet the body's daily requirements in terms of both macronutrients such as carbohydrates, protein and fat and micronutrients such as vitamins and minerals. Malnutrition can occur not only when there is a deficiency in nutrient intake, but also when there is an excess.

Some examples of malnutrition around us include:

### ■ Stunting:



Stunting is a chronic nutritional problem caused by a lack of nutrient intake over a long period, typically due to insufficient food consumption in relation to nutritional

requirements<sup>2</sup>. The stunting condition is only visible after a child reaches the age of two<sup>3</sup>.

### ■ Obesity:



Excessive fat accumulation due to an imbalance between energy intake and energy expenditure over a long period<sup>4</sup>.

### ■ Deficiency:



Micronutrient deficiencies (also known as hidden hunger) occur when vitamin and mineral intake or absorption is too low to maintain health and development in

children and normal physical and mental function in adults. The causes include poor eating habits, illness or increased micronutrient requirements that are not met during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Meanwhile, the term undernutrition refers to chronic calorie deficiency, with consumption of less than 1,800 kilocalories per day - the minimum amount needed for the average person to live healthy and productive lives<sup>5</sup>.

**“About 90 percent of physical and mental illnesses are caused by diet and food,”** said a nutritionist from the Faculty of Medicine of Diponegoro University in Semarang, Professor Muhammad Sulchan<sup>6</sup>.

A study on global dietary trends published by The Lancet journal shows that the majority of people in 195 surveyed countries consume too much of the wrong food. The same study also revealed that on average, people in various parts of the world consume 10 times more sugary drinks than the recommended amount<sup>7</sup>.

In addition, data from 1990-2017 in the study also shows that around 11 million deaths worldwide are caused by poor diet. Currently, cardiovascular disease, which is usually caused or aggravated by obesity, remains the leading cause of death<sup>8</sup>.

### What does healthy diet mean?

A healthy diet refers to the practice of consuming a well-balanced intake of all essential nutrients that are necessary for the body. This means that daily food intake should consist of a balanced amount of protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals and water from natural sources<sup>9</sup>.

According to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia<sup>10</sup>, an ideal plate of food consists of the following:

- Half of the plate consists of fruits and vegetables, meaning 1/3 fruits and 2/3 vegetables.
- The other half of the plate consists of protein and carbohydrates, meaning 2/3 staple food and 1/3 animal or plant protein.

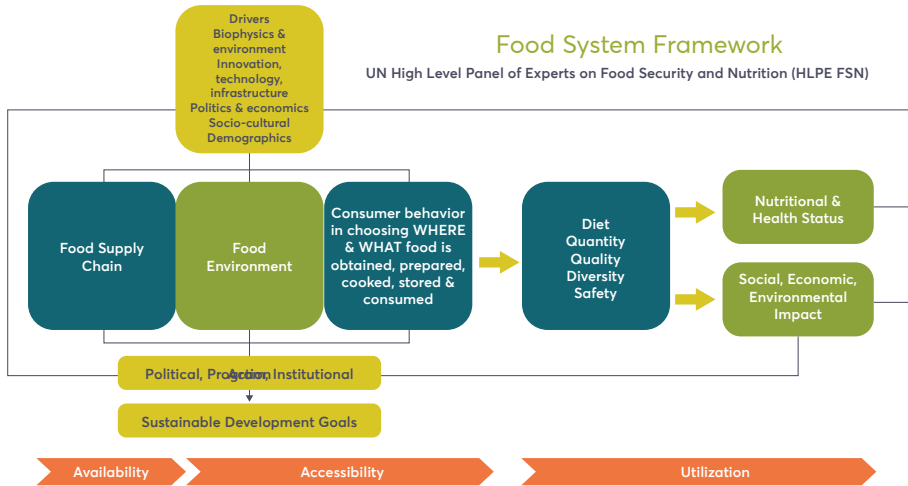
All of these can be obtained from local foods in each region. For example, a lunch plate ( $\pm$ 700 calories) can consist of the following:



Source: Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia

## II. The Importance of Healthy Diet within the Food System Framework

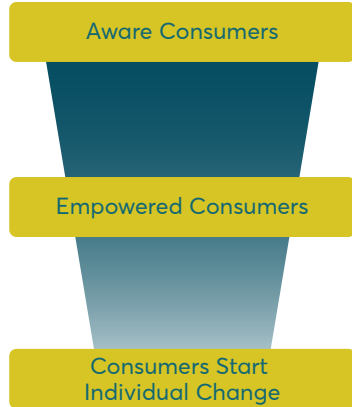
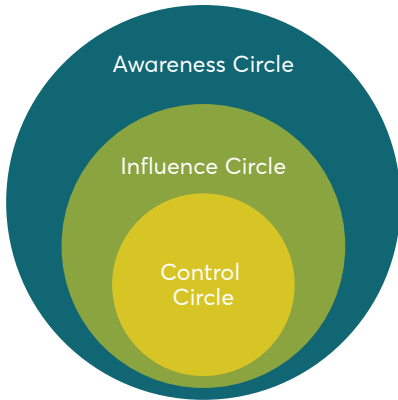
Adopting a healthy diet does not only give us health benefits, but also contributes to the dynamics of the food system.



A healthy diet may start as an individual choice as shown in the box above. However, if done collectively, it will create a new demand for healthy food ingredients. This will affect the entire food supply chain from production, storage and distribution to processing, packaging and retail sales of food. The collective movement towards healthy food triggered by individual awareness will also affect the environment surrounding the food, such as the content of food product advertisements in the media.

Furthermore, the collective movement towards healthy food will also have an impact on social, economic, environmental, cultural and political changes that will ultimately affect the availability and access to food.

## CIRCLE OF LIFE



In summary, a shift in the dynamics of the food system can begin with individual awareness to adopt a healthy diet. To that end, individual awareness must be translated into a collective movement. Activities such as socialization, campaigns and public education are essential components in transforming individual awareness into a collective movement.



# III. Steps Towards a Healthy Diet

---

We have learned the importance of a healthy diet, not only for individuals but also for the environment. So, what can we do to start a healthy diet?

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia<sup>11</sup> suggests the following habits to cultivate a healthy diet:

1



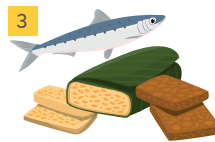
Consuming diverse local staple foods.

2



Limiting consumption of sweet, salty and fatty foods.

3



Consuming high-protein side dishes.

4



Making having breakfast a habit.

5



Drinking sufficient clean water.

6



Eating lots of fruits and vegetables.

7



Reading the nutrition labels on food packaging.

By following these seven simple steps, we can start incorporating a healthy diet into our daily lives. Additionally, maintaining clean hands with soap and water and engaging in regular physical activity can help us maintain an ideal body weight.



# References

---

- 1 Seri Berpikir Sistem untuk Sistem Pangan Berkelanjutan, Modul 2 Keragaman Pangan Dan Pola Makan Sehat, The Food and Land Use Coalition
- 2 Mengenal Stunting dan Gizi Buruk. Penyebab, Gejala, Dan Mencegah, <https://promkes.kemkes.go.id/?p=8486>
- 3 Cegah Stunting untuk Masa Depan Anak yang Lebih Baik, <https://diskes.baliprov.go.id/cegah-stunting-untuk-masa-depan-anak-yang-lebih-baik/>
- 4 Apa itu Obesitas, <http://p2ptm.kemkes.go.id/infographic-p2ptm/obesitas/apa-itu-obesitas>
- 5 FAO (2013); and von Grebmer et al. (2013).
- 6 90 Persen Penyakit Akibat Pola Makan, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2010/08/09/09465236/90.persen.penyakit.akibat.pola.makan>.
- 7 Peneliti: Pola makan buruk/menu tidak sehat penyebab satu dari lima kematian, <http://p2ptm.kemkes.go.id/tag/peneliti-pola-makan-burukmenu-tidak-sehat-penyebab-satu-dari-lima-kematian>
- 8 ibid
- 9 11 Cara Tepat untuk Memulai Pola Makan Sehat, <https://www.klikdokter.com/gaya-hidup/diet-nutrisi/11-cara-tepat-untuk-memulai-pola-makan-sehat>
- 10 "Isi Piringku" perlu diperkenalkan dan diterapkan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, <http://p2ptm.kemkes.go.id/infographic-p2ptm/obesitas/isi-piringku-perlu-diperkenalkan-dan-diterapkan-dalam-kehidupan-sehari-hari>
- 11 Sobat Sehat, yuk terapkan kebiasaan baik dalam pola makan yang sehat berikut ini, <http://p2ptm.kemkes.go.id/infographic-p2ptm/obesitas/page/2/sobat-sehat-yuk-terapkan-kebiasaan-baik-dalam-pola-makan-yang-sehat-berikut-ini>





Drafted by



Koalisi  
**Sistem Pangan Lestari**

Bagian dari **Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU)**

[indonesia@folu.org](mailto:indonesia@folu.org)

January 2023