

Storing Yearly Little Dues of Wheat, and Wine and Oil:

Learning Refugee Diets to Improve Patient Understanding of Nutrition

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Our refugee patients suffer from significant traumas. Whether the victims of individual brutality or subjects of a disintegrating state, it is not uncommon for refugees to exhibit significantly harmful psychological behaviors. These can be aggravated by the feelings associated with leaving behind one's family, by attempting to adjust to an alien environment, and cultural and linguistic isolation.

Foods, particularly familiar and comfortable foods, can help ease these feelings. Doctors treating refugee populations ought to capitalize on the psychological boons proper nutritional guidance might yield. By couching nutritional guidance in a language familiar to the refugee patient, doctors may achieve both better compliance and psychologically curative effects.

Below I will identify the nutritional characteristics peculiar to some representative refugee populations, including both constitutive and cultural dimensions. Later I will describe a few general lexicons that may easily provide flexibility to doctors wishing to recast their nutritional guidance in familiar terms. At the end I will attach materials that may be useful for the Refugee Clinic's evolving treatment protocol.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT & GROCERY RESTRICTIONS

As refugees, our patients typically rely on governmental assistance for their sustenance. Because these programs often include significant restrictions on the kinds and amounts of nutrition participants will have access to, it is important for physicians to familiarize themselves with the terms of these programs. Doing so will enable physicians to provide nutritional recommendations to their patients which are not only healthful and helpful, but also feasible.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps) is a federally-funded, state-administered relief program, which provides use-

restricted financing for household food needs. Eligible persons must fall below 130% of the federal poverty level. Legal immigrants must have lived in the USA for at least 5 years, or must be receiving disability-related assistance benefits, or must be under the age of 18. The table at the bottom of the page describes categories of immigrants who may be eligible for SNAP benefits.

SNAP funds may only be used for food items, including breads, cereals, fruits, vegetables, meats, fish, poultry, dairy products, food-producing seeds and plants. SNAP restrictions do not prohibit the purchasing of soft drinks, candy, cookies, or ice cream. The restrictions do prohibit the purchase of alcohol, tobacco, non-food items, vitamins, medicines, and hot food.

Because SNAP is administered independently by different states, benefit amounts and eligibility can vary from one state to another. Virginia has established the following benefit scheme until October of 2014:¹

Number of People in Household	Monthly	Weekly	Every 2 Weeks	Twice a Month
1	\$1,245	\$289.53	\$579.06	\$622.50
2	1,681	390.93	781.86	840.50
3	2,116	492.09	984.18	1,058.00
4	2,552	593.48	1,186.97	1,276.00
5	2,987	693.65	1,389.30	1,493.50
6	3,423	796.04	1,592.09	1,711.50
7	3,858	897.20	1,794.41	1,929.00
8	4,294	998.60	1,997.20	2,147.00
For each additional member add	+\$436	+\$101.39	+\$202.79	+\$218

Non-Citizen Category	Description
Lawfully Admitted for Permanent Residence (LPRs)	LPRs are holders of green cards. This category also includes "Amerasian immigrants" as defined under §584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 1988.
Asylees	Granted asylum under Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) §208.
Parolees	Paroled into the U.S. under § 212(d)(5) of the INA for at least 1 year.
Deportation (or Removal) Withheld	Deportation is being withheld under §243(h) of the INA as in effect before 4/1/97, or removal is withheld under §241(b)(3) of the INA.
Conditional Entrants	Granted conditional entry under §203(a)(7) of the INA as in effect before 4/1/80.
Cuban or Haitian Entrants	Cuban or Haitian entrant under §501(c) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980.
Battered Non-Citizens	Under certain circumstances, a battered non-citizen spouse or child, non-citizen parent of a battered child or an non-citizen child of a battered parent with a petition pending.
Refugees	Refugees admitted to the United States under §207 of the INA.
Trafficking Victims	Victims under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.
Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants (SIV)	Special immigrant status under §101(a)(27) of the INA may be granted to Iraqi and Afghan nationals who have worked on behalf of the U.S. government in Iraq or Afghanistan. The Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2010 (DoDAA), P.L. 111-118, §8120 enacted on December 19, 2009, provides that SIVs are eligible for all benefits to the same extent and the same period of time as refugees. ²

By maintaining awareness of the amount of resources a refugee patient has available for food, physicians can create more realistic nutritional prescriptions that fit within those constraints. Tailoring a recommendation in this way will encourage compliance among the refugee patients.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN

Like SNAP, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) uses state-administered federal funds to provide relief to vulnerable populations. This program exists in addition to SNAP benefits, but has much more restricted eligibility requirements. These funds are used to provide

food, health care referrals, and nutrition education, but are limited to low-income pregnant or postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to have some kind of nutritional risk. Virginia has established the eligibility guidelines shown on the table below through 2015.²

Eligible women and their families must fall below 185% of the federal poverty line. Unlike SNAP's essentially freeform nutrition assistance, WIC supplements take the form of regimented dietary prescriptions. Participants are not permitted to substitute one item for another, though they need not buy everything prescribed.

Below are sample food packages provided by WIC.³

Economic Unit	Income				
	Annual	Monthly	Twice-Monthly	Bi-Weekly	Weekly
1	\$21,590	\$1,800	\$900	\$831	\$416
2	\$29,101	\$2,426	\$1,213	\$1,120	\$560
3	\$36,612	\$3,051	\$1,526	\$1,409	\$705
4	\$44,123	\$3,677	\$1,839	\$1,698	\$849
5	\$51,634	\$4,303	\$2,152	\$1,986	\$993
6	\$59,145	\$4,929	\$2,465	\$2,275	\$1,138
7	\$66,656	\$5,555	\$2,778	\$2,564	\$1,282
8	\$74,167	\$6,181	\$3,091	\$2,853	\$1,427
Each Additional Member Add	+ \$7,511	+ \$626	+ \$313	+ \$289	+ \$145

Count a pregnant woman as 2

SNAPSHOT of the WIC Food Packages ¹						
Maximum Monthly Allowances of Supplemental Foods For Infants In Food Packages I, II and III						
	—Fully Formula fed—		—Partially Breastfed—		—Fully Breastfed—	
Foods	Food Packages I and III A: 0-3 months B: 4-5 months	Food Packages II and III 6-11 months	Food Packages I and III A: 0 to 1 month B: 1-3 months C: 4-5 months	Food Packages II and III 6-11 months	Food Package I 0-5 months	Food Package II 6-11 months
WIC Formula	A: 806 fl oz reconstituted liquid concentrate B: 884 fl oz reconstituted liquid concentrate	624 fl. oz. reconstituted liquid concentrate	A: 1 can powder B: 364 fl oz reconstituted liquid concentrate C: 442 fl. oz. reconstituted liquid concentrate	312 fl. oz. reconstituted liquid concentrate		
Infant cereal		24 OZ		24 OZ		24 OZ
Baby food fruits and vegetables		128 oz		128 oz		256 oz
Baby food meat						77.5 oz

¹ Refer to the regulatory requirements at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/benefitsandservices/foodpkg.htm> for the complete provisions and requirements for infant formula and infant foods in the WIC food packages.

SNAPSHOT of the WIC Food Packages ¹

Maximum Monthly Allowances of Supplemental Foods for Children and Women

Foods	Children	Women		
	Food Package IV 1 through 4 years	Food Package V: Pregnant and Partially Breast- feeding (up to 1 year postpartum)	Food Package VI: Postpartum (up to 6 months postpartum)	Food Package VII: Fully Breastfeeding (up to 1 year post- partum)
Juice, single strength	128 fl oz	144 fl oz	96 fl oz	144 fl oz
Milk ²	16 qt	22 qt	16 qt	24 qt
Breakfast cereal ³	36 oz	36 oz	36 oz	36 oz
Cheese				1 lb
Eggs	1 dozen	1 dozen	1 dozen	2 dozen
Fruits and vegetables	\$6.00 in cash value vouchers	\$10.00 in cash value vouchers	\$10.00 in cash value vouchers	\$10.00 in cash value vouchers
Whole wheat bread ⁴	2 lb	1 lb		1 lb
Fish (canned) ⁵				30 oz
Legumes, dry or canned and/or	1 lb (64 oz canned) Or	1 lb (64 ounce canned) And	1 lb (64 ounce canned) Or	1 lb (64 ounce canned) And
Peanut butter	18 oz	18 oz	18 oz	18 oz

¹ Refer to the regulatory requirements at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/benefitsandservices/foodpkg.htm> for the complete provisions and requirements for WIC foods.

² Allowable options for milk alternatives are cheese, soy beverage, and tofu.

³ At least one half of the total number of breakfast cereals on State agency food list must be whole grain.

⁴ Allowable options for whole wheat bread are whole grain bread, brown rice, bulgur, oatmeal, whole-grain barley, soft corn or whole wheat tortillas.

⁵ Allowable options for canned fish are light tuna, salmon, sardines, and mackerel.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is another form of state-administered federal assistance. According to the Virginia Department of Social Services, “Virginia's TANF program emphasizes personal responsibility. Participants may be provided with services such as job skills training, work experience, job readiness training, child care assistance, transportation and other work related expenses.” TANF takes the form of a monthly cash grant to eligible families. The income level required for eligibility varies with the area of Virginia in which the applicant lives.

Household Size	Rural Areas	Most Urban Areas	Northern Virginia
1	\$270	\$322	\$450
2	\$424	\$475	\$605
3	\$546	\$596	\$727

TANF grants are limited to 60 months of assistance. Eligibility is limited to families with children under the age of 18 and participation in the Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare Program. Participation is limited only to eligible aliens. This list significantly overlaps with the list for eligible aliens under SNAP and includes lawful permanent residents, asylees, refugees, Afghani and Iraqi aliens granted special immigrant status, parolees who have been here for at least one year,

those who have had their deportation withheld under certain INA provisions, those granted conditional entry, aliens subjected to battery or extreme cruelty while in the USA, and Cuban or Haitian entrants. A subset of these are eligible for TANF immediately; the rest must have been in the USA for five years before they can participate in the program.

According to the Virginia Poverty Law Center, “the amount of TANF you receive depends on your family’s size, where you live, and any income you have. For example, the largest TANF payment for a family of three in most rural parts of Virginia is \$228 a month. For a family of 3 in most urban areas, the largest TANF payment would be \$389 a month.”⁴

Because TANF takes the form of direct cash assistance, it does not operate subject to the kinds of dietary restrictions which apply to SNAP and WIC.

NUTRITIONAL PARADIGMS OF SELECT REFUGEE POPULATIONS

Our refugees come from a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This cultural foundation is what our patients know and feel comfortable with. Through a better understanding of their dietary backgrounds, we can hope to lessen anxiety for our patients while gaining a better understanding of what to offer as advice. I have profiled a few of the common groups of refugees we see

in clinic, including the Congolese and Afghani populations which will continue to grow in number.

AFGHANI

The normal Afghani cuisine is based on the nation's major crops: Wheat, maize, barley and rice. Fresh yogurt, coriander, garlic, onions, tomatoes, potatoes and fruit are widely available in Afghanistan. Generally, rice dishes are considered the best part of the meal. The national dish is *Kabuli Paulo*, a pilaf dish consisting of steamed rice mixed with lentils, raisins, carrots, and lamb, chicken, or beef. Nuts can also often be added to this dish.

However, it is only the wealthier families that can afford to eat rice dishes at least once a day. Often wheat is much cheaper than rice. There are many breads to accompany dishes: *Naan* (white/whole wheat blend making a thin oval-shaped bread), *Chapati* (whole grain wheat flat unleavened bread), *Lavash* (very thin bread used as a plate for meats and stews) and *Obi Non* (white flour bread that is thicker than *naan*—pure white flour is more expensive).

The bread is often served with soups containing vegetables, potatoes, and sometimes meats. Other common accompaniments are *torshi* (various pickled fruits and vegetables) and chutneys (sauces).

Another classic dish is dumplings filled with onion and ground beef. These are often served with a tomato-based sauce and yogurt or *quroot*-based sauce. *Quroot* is a byproduct of butter made from sheep's or goat's milk.

A form of Afghani cuisine that is widely available in the USA is the kebab. These consist of pieces of meat (most popularly lamb), fish, or vegetables roasted or grilled on a skewer or spit.

There are various customs and traditions associated with Afghan cuisine. Most significant is the requirement that the food, usually meat, is prepared Halal (i.e. permissible according to Islamic Law). Pork, for example, is a non-Halal meat. The slaughter of animals must be performed by a Muslim who invokes the name of Allah before the slaughter. A sharp knife must be used to cut the throat, windpipe and carotids so as to cause swift and painless death. Lastly, blood must be drained from the veins.

Another very important custom amongst the Muslims is the celebration of Ramadan. This takes place during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and Muslims will observe 30 days of fasting. This fasting is considered obligatory unless breast-feeding, diabetic, or undergoing menses. From dawn until sunset they will refrain from all foods, liquids (including water), and sexual activity. Medication schedules may need to be adjusted during this time as many will refuse to take daytime medications as it would break their fast.⁵

While there is a wide array of foods in Afghan cuisine, not all citizens have access to such a variety. There is significant malnutrition affecting mainly women and children. About half of the young children have stunting of growth and 6-10%, depending on the region, are underweight for their height. Nearly 40% of the children under 5 are anemic, with 10% of this same age group having Vitamin A deficiency. 70% of children aged 7-11 years have iodine deficiency. For women, 25% are anemic, 20% have Vitamin A deficiency, and 70% of reproductive-age women have iodine deficiency.⁶

Among the malnourished population generally, vegetable consumption is low, often overcooked, and limited to onion and green chilies. Poor households cannot afford fresh fruit, especially not for daily consumption. Meat consumption can also often be limited to holidays and celebrations due to the expense. Additionally, potatoes are seen as vegetables, so this may be an important point to clarify when discussing diet with new Afghani refugees.⁷

According to the normal Afghan cuisine, I have made several patient handouts based on nutritional deficiencies that direct patients on what foods they can add to their diet. These handouts can be found in the Appendix section.

BURMESE

The Burmese diet is primarily comprised of rice and fish. Freshwater shrimp and fish are the primary sources of protein consumed by the Burmese. Burmese seafood is prepared in a variety of ways: Fish can be served fresh, salted, dried, fermented (*ngapi*), or made into a paste. Rice is seen as the centerpiece of any meal and is served with almost everything else.⁸

Mohinga—a rice noodle and fish soup—is traditionally served as the Burmese breakfast. Many consider this preparation “to be Burma's national dish.”⁹

A wide variety of salads are also found in Burmese cooking, particularly from street vendors in the major cities. These salads can be built primarily from starches like rice or noodles, vegetables like potato and tomato, or other components like *ngapi* or pickled tea leaves (*lappet*).¹⁰

Due to the influence of Buddhist and Muslim cultural restrictions, beef and pork are generally absent from Burmese cuisine. Vegetarianism is widespread in Burma during *Vassa*, a three month-long period known as the Rains Retreat, usually taking place from July to October. The Buddhists also practice vegetarianism on sabbath (*Uposatha*) days, which vary monthly according to the lunar calendar. Fasting during these periods takes the form of eating only before noon and avoiding all forms of meat.¹¹

CONGOLESE

The traditional Congolese cuisine tends to vary based on region due to varying availability. The staple food is cassava (also known as yuca), the root of a woody shrub. It is a major crop in the Congo as it is very resilient to drought, disease, and infestation (especially the more bitter varieties). However, as the main course, it is a very poor source of protein. While the roots are rich in vitamin C, they are lacking in most other vitamins and minerals. Its value is mainly as a carbohydrate source. Cassava is often eaten by grinding the leaves or slicing the root. Improper preparation of cassava leaves and roots can lead to cyanide poisoning.¹²

Congolese meals mostly consist of stews with meat, vegetables, and a starchy ingredient (e.g. Cassava, sweet potatoes, rice, maize, yams). Palm oil and peanut butter (ground nuts) are also used frequently in cooking. The most common vegetables used are cassava leaves, sweet-potato leaves, *tshitekutaku* (a spinach-like plant), mushrooms, and okra. Meat is expensive and thus uncommon in most households. However, fish are plentiful along the Congo River and are baked, broiled, fried, or dried and mixed with other staple ingredients.

To accompany the stews, there is rice and a type of fermented bread—*kwanga*—that is commercially produced throughout the Congo. It is made from cassava flour. The cassava flour can be mixed with maize flour to increase the nutritional content.¹³

When Congolese refugees arrive to the US, many are unfamiliar with modern appliances. About 15% of households have electricity (most of these being in the metropolitan areas). Only 11% of households have refrigerators. Therefore, many refugees may be unfamiliar with gas or electrical cooking appliances and will likely need basic training in these areas.¹⁴

There are also certain food customs depending on the tribe or village. Meals are traditionally eaten with one's fingers out of a large communal dish, making hand hygiene significant in decreasing spread of diarrheal diseases. 10% of the Congolese population is Muslim. Once again, we have the restriction of only eating Halal meat and fasting during the 30-day Ramadan period. Also, in many villages, if a family has a totem, it cannot eat that animal as it is considered a spiritual protector. Most families have 1-2 large meals per day, with the main meal consumed around 3pm.¹⁵

Unfortunately, food production has decreased by 30-40% over the last 10 years due to natural disasters and political instability. This has led to poor nutrition and decreased calorie intake. About 34% of children under 5 are underweight, with 40-50% of children under 5 having stunted growth. 71% of children less than 5 and 53% of women have iron-deficiency anemia. Diarrhea,

especially in children, can lead to these nutrient deficiencies. Women can also have low zinc levels.¹⁶

BHUTANESE

One must keep in mind that most Bhutanese refugees coming to the USA are coming from refugee camps in which they may have been living for up to 16 years. Therefore, my discussion of the Bhutanese cuisine will be limited to what the refugees are provided at the camp. Food rations are provided by the World Food Program and UNHCR. These consist of rice, lentils, chickpeas, vegetable oil, sugar, salt, and fresh vegetables. This means most are eating some combination of rice, lentils and curry.¹⁷

The foods eaten can vary depending on faith. Approximately 60% of the refugees are Hindu, 27% are Buddhists, 10% are *Kirat* (an indigenous animistic faith), and the remaining are Christian.

Vegetarianism rate is low (6%), however most Hindus will not eat cow meat. The day usually consists of two meals—brunch and dinner. The mourning custom can also cause people to change their diet. After the death of a relative, a person will spend 13-16 days mourning. During this time, they will limit their intake to one meal of plain rice per day, with fruit, pickled ginger, lemon, and water allowed throughout the day.¹⁸

There is an issue of severe chronic malnutrition at the camps, especially with regard to Vitamin A and B12. Vitamin B12 deficiency was found in 30-60% of Bhutanese refugees who resettled to the US in 2008-2011. Anemia is also very common with about 20% of children under 15 and adults over 65 being anemic on arrival to Texas in 2009-2011. A similar prevalence is found in women of reproductive age as well as pregnant women. The most common cause of the anemia was iron-deficiency. However other causes like malaria, parasites, hemoglobinopathies, and chronic disease were also present. Lastly, there is also a tendency towards vitamin B2 (riboflavin) deficiency, often causing angular stomatitis in the adolescents.¹⁹

One should also consider the many home remedies that are used to deal with illness. Common remedies include basil for gout, colds and certain pains; garlic, turmeric, ginger, and cardamom for stomach pains; and heated mustard oil for massages to relieve muscle pain in the elderly.²⁰

LINGUISTIC OPTIONS FOR
NUTRITIONAL PRESCRIPTIONS

Along with the idiosyncrasies of ingredients and customs, foreign cultures also have alternative ways of conceptualizing nutrition. For example, both Burmese and Latin cultures view foods as “heating” or “cooling” foods. If you have a hot illness (e.g. headache), you should be managed with a cold therapy, or perhaps should discontinue current hot therapies. Many people believe that a hot-cold imbalance can make a person susceptible to disease. Examples of cold conditions are: cancer, colic, indigestion, headache, menstrual cramps, pneumonia, and URI. Examples of hot conditions are: bile (or “rage”), diabetes, GERD or PUD, hypertension, pregnancy, sore throat, and infection. Tables below demonstrate “cold” and “hot” foods to combat imbalance.²¹

Cooling Foods

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains, Legumes & Seeds	Meat, Seafood & Dairy	Condiments & Beverages
Apple	Alfalfa Sprouts	Barley	Clam	Chrysanthemum Tea
Banana	Asparagus	Buckwheat	Chicken Egg	Green Tea
Grapefruit	Bamboo Shoot	Millet	Crab	Peppermint Tea
Kiwifruit	Bitter Melon	Mung Bean	Duck Egg	Salt
Lemon	Celery	Soy Bean	Rabbit	Sesame Oil
Orange	Chinese Radish	Tofu	Seaweed	
Pear	(Daikon)	Wheat Bran		
Persimmon	Cucumber	Whole Wheat		
Star Fruit	Eggplant			
Strawberry	Green leafy vegetable			
Watermelon	Kelp			
	Lettuce			
	Lotus Root			
	Mushroom			
	Spinach			
	Swiss Chard			
	Tomato			
	Water Chestnut			
	Watercress			
	Winter Melon			

Warming Foods

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains, Legumes & Seeds	Meat, Seafood & Dairy	Condiments & Beverages
Cherry	Chives	Caraway seed	Butter	Basil
Chinese Red Dates	Leek	Chestnut	Chicken	Brown Sugar
Coconut meat	Mustard greens	Glutinous Rice	Deer (Venison)	Chili
Coconut milk	Onion	Malt	Eel	Cinnamon
Guava	Pumpkin	Pine nut	Goat Milk	Clove
Hawthorn Fruit	Squash	Pistachio nut	Ham	Coffee
Longan		Walnut	Lamb	Coriander
Lychee			Mussel	Fennel Seed
Mandarin Peel (dried)			Prawns (shrimp)	Garlic
Mango				Ginger
Nectarine				Ginseng
Peach				Nutmeg
Raspberry				Pepper
				Rosemary
				Spearmint
				Vinegar
				Wine

Neutral Foods

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains, Legumes & Seeds	Meat, Seafood & Dairy	Condiments & Beverages
Apricot	Black fungus mushroom	Adzuki bean	Abalone	Peanut Oil
Figs	Carrot	Almond	Beef	Honey
Goji berries	Chinese cabbage	Black sesame seed	Cow's milk	Saffron
Grape	Corn	Black soybean	Duck	Licorice
Olive	Potato	Broad bean	Fish	
Papaya	Pumpkin	Kidney Bean	Oyster	
Pineapple	Shiitake mushroom	Lotus seed	Pork	
Plum	Sweet potato	Peanut	Scallop	
	Taro	Peas		
	Turnip	Rice bran		
	White fungus	Rye		
		String bean		
		Sunflower seed		
		White rice		
		Yellow soybean		

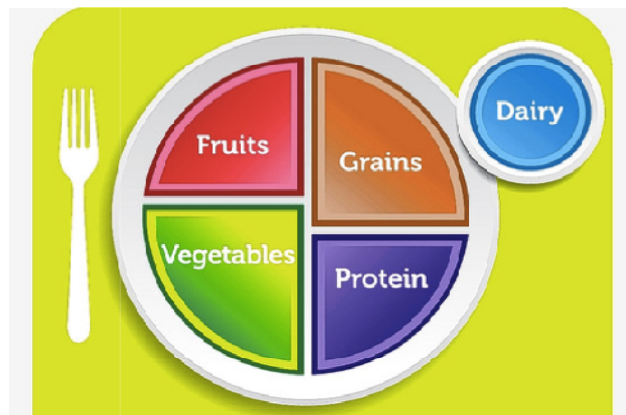
TALKING WITH COLORS

Going to the grocery store for the first time can be quite overwhelming for new refugees. Because of the overwhelming diversity and large amounts of totally unknown foods, it may be easier to provide prescriptions for food in a basic language which groups foods according to their colors. This can even be useful for experienced refugees because it is something to which they can more easily relate. Patients are less likely to remember more iron means more spinach, broccoli, oranges, etc. Instead, to increase overall nutritional intake, giving simple directions such as, “The more different colors of vegetables you have the greater the number of vitamins you are getting,” can be very helpful. Or: “Always pick the leafy vegetables that are darker green because they have more nutrients.” One can consider using ‘nutricolor’ groups.²²

Red, orange or deep yellow = Vitamin A, Vitamin C
 Deep green leafy = Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Iron
 (Spinach)
 Brown = B Vitamins, Fiber, Protein, Carbohydrates
 White (milk products) = Calcium, Protein

The USDA adopted a similar mind-set when promoting the visual aid of the food plate. This seems like it would also be useful in the refugee population. Not only does the plate help visualize proper nutritional diversity, but it may also aid in curbing the overconsumption of grains such as rice.²³

“When it comes to eating, what’s more useful than a plate? More simple than a plate?” said First Lady Michelle Obama.²⁴



My Daily Food Plan

Based on the information you provided, this is your daily recommended amount for each food group.



Your results are based on a 2000 Calorie pattern.

Name: _____

CONCLUSION

In order to provide adequate care to refugee populations, it is imperative that physicians demonstrate cultural sensitivity. By familiarizing ourselves with the unique backgrounds and practices of our patients, we will be better attuned to their specific needs and better able to identify their nutritional goals.

Our prescriptions can be cast in many different terms. We might choose to talk about mechanisms of action and specific biochemical reactions; we might choose to talk about deficiencies and intake; we might choose to use metaphors like “fight” or “repel.” Even though the underlying medical situation remains the same, physicians have a wide degree of latitude when it comes to the way in which they describe problems and solutions to their patients.

When physicians take the effort to cast their prescriptions in ways which resonate with the familiar conceptual framework of refugee populations, not only will we have more success in getting our patients to understand and follow the needed course of action, but we will also improve our relationships with those patients. Perhaps most importantly, we will help to make them feel more accepted and integrated in their new home.

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APPENDIX I

DIET CHANGES & SUPPLEMENTATION REFERENCE SHEETS

AFGHANI DIET CHANGES AND SUPPLEMENTATION

IRON

Iron is a very important part of your blood cells, which help carry oxygen to the tissues. It allows your muscles and brain to work properly. Low iron can often make you feel weak and tired all the time.

Meats:

Your body absorbs more iron from meat than any other source. You can add these meats to your rice pulao dishes, kebabs, or khameerbobs

- Red Meat
- Chicken
- Seafood (fish, shrimp and more)

Vegetables and Fruits:

These are all ingredients that could easily be added to a pulao, soups, or even to a small side salad with your meal. Try not to over-cook vegetables as this will lower the nutrition value.

- Dark green leafy vegetables (especially spinach!)
- Dried fruit (raisins and apricots)
- Peas

Carbohydrates:

You can have these breads with Torshi or with larger meals

- Iron-fortified breads, cereals and pastas

Help increase iron absorption by also eating these foods (with Vitamin C) at the same time:

- Orange or grapefruit (can do juice)
- Strawberries
- Kiwi
- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Broccoli
- Leafy greens
- Melons

Meats:

Can be added to rice pulao, kebabs, or khameerbobs

- Liver (BEST SOURCE)
- Beef
- Chicken
- Fish
- Whole egg

Dairy:

Can use in yogurt-based sauces for foods.

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese (paneer)

CALCIUM

Calcium is needed to make your bones stronger and to help your muscles stay active.

Seafood:

Can be added to kebabs, soups, or pulao

- Salmon
- Shrimp
- Sardines

Fruits and Vegetables:

Add to your soups or enjoy as a snack. You can also enjoy the fruits after dinner.

- Broccoli
- Green soy beans
- Kale
- Collard Greens
- Oranges
- Figs

Dairy:

Can use in yogurt-based sauces for foods.

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese (paneer)

VITAMIN B12

Vitamin B12 is very important to help the body use your nutrients for energy and for other purposes. It also helps your nervous system work properly.

Low B12 can cause fatigue, numbness or tingling in your hands or feet, and memory difficulties.

PROTEIN

Protein helps build cells, body fluids, antibodies and other parts of the immune system. Sometimes proteins are also used for energy. Lack of protein can cause weakness and fatigue, weight loss, hair loss, and increased infections.

Meat:

This is the best source of protein. Can be used in soups, pulao, or kebabs.

- Chicken
- Turkey
- Tuna
- Salmon
- Beef
- Shrimp
- Lamb
- Scallops
- Sardines

Other options:

- Pumpkin seeds (can be added to pulao or on top of side salad, or eaten as a snack)
- Quinoa (can make a pulao using quinoa instead of rice)
- Greek yogurt (when buying plain yogurt for your foods and sauces, consider plain greek yogurt instead of the regular yogurt)
- Eggs
- Spinach (add to a side salad or soup)
- Beans (add to soups or eat with pulao)

FIBER

Fiber is important to help maintain regular bowel movements and prevent constipation and hemorrhoids. Fiber with enough fluid during the day can help your digestion move along easily.

Fruits:

Enjoy after meals as dessert or as snacks.

- Raspberries
- Pear with skin
- Apple with skin
- Banana

Grains, cereal, pasta:

- Quinoa (use in pulao instead of rice)
- Brown rice (use in pulao)
- Whole wheat breads (consider using whole grain flour to make naan or chapatis)

Beans, nuts, and seeds:

Can add any of these to soups or pulao

- Split peas
- Lentils
- Black beans
- Lima beans
- Sunflower seeds
- Almonds

Vegetables:

Can add to soups or pulao.

- Artichoke
- Green peas
- Broccoli

BHUTANESE DIET CHANGES AND SUPPLEMENTATION

IRON

Iron is a very important part of your blood cells, which help carry oxygen to the tissues. It allows your muscles and brain to work properly. Low iron can often make you feel weak and tired all the time.

Meats:

Your body absorbs more iron from meat than any other source. You can add these meats to your curries if you are not vegetarian.

- Chicken
- Seafood (fish, shrimp and more)
- Red Meat (can exclude cow meat if you wish)
- Pork (unless you are Muslim)

Vegetables and Fruits:

These are all ingredients that could easily be added to curries and lentil dishes. Try not to over-cook vegetables as this will lower the nutrition value.

- Dark green leafy vegetables (especially spinach!)
- Dried fruit (raisins and apricots)
- Peas

Carbohydrates:

- Iron-fortified breads, cereals and pastas (can eat with rice and curry)

Help increase iron absorption by also eating these foods (with Vitamin C) at the same time:

- Orange or grapefruit (can do juice)
- Strawberries
- Kiwi
- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Leafy greens
- Melons

Meats:

Can be added to curries, rice, or lentil dishes

- Liver (BEST SOURCE)
- Chicken
- Fish
- Whole egg
- Beef (unless excluded for religion)

Dairy:

- Milk
- Yogurt (can use as addition to curries and lentil dishes)
- Cheese (paneer)

CALCIUM

Calcium is needed to make your bones stronger and to help your muscles stay active.

Seafood:

Can be added to curries or as a dish on its own.

- Salmon
- Shrimp
- Sardines

Fruits and Vegetables:

Add to curries, side salads or have as a snack. You can also enjoy the fruits after dinner.

- Broccoli
- Green soy beans
- Kale
- Collard Greens
- Oranges
- Figs

Dairy:

Can use in yogurt-based sauces for foods.

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese (paneer)

VITAMIN B12

Vitamin B12 is very important to help the body use your nutrients for energy and for other purposes. It also helps your nervous system work properly.

Low B12 can cause you to be tired, have numbness or tingling in your hands or feet, and have memory difficulties.

PROTEIN

Protein helps build cells, body fluids, antibodies and other parts of the immune system. Sometimes proteins are also used for energy. Lack of protein can cause weakness and fatigue, weight loss, hair loss, and increased infections.

Meat:

This is the best source of protein. Can be added to soups, noodle dishes, or as a dish on its own.

- Chicken
- Turkey
- Tuna
- Salmon
- Shrimp
- Lamb
- Scallops
- Sardines
- Beef (might be excluded for religious reason)

Other options:

- Pumpkin seeds (can be added to salads or curries)
- Quinoa (can eat with curries and lentils instead of rice)
- Greek yogurt (when buying plain yogurt for sauces, consider buying plain greek yogurt instead)
- Eggs
- Spinach (can add to curries, lentils, salads)
- Beans (can add to curries)

FIBER

Fiber is important to help maintain regular bowel movements and prevent constipation and hemorrhoids. Fiber with enough fluid during the day can help your digestion move along easily.

Fruits:

Enjoy after meals as dessert or as snacks.

- Raspberries
- Pear with skin
- Apple with skin
- Banana

Grains, cereal, pasta:

Replace white rice with any below.

- Quinoa
- Brown rice
- Whole wheat breads (use whole wheat flour to make chapati)

Beans, nuts, and seeds:

Can add to lentil dishes, curries, or simply have as snack.

- Split peas
- Lentils
- Black beans
- Lima beans
- Sunflower seeds
- Almonds

Vegetables:

Can add to curries.

- Artichoke
- Green peas
- Broccoli

BURMESE DIET CHANGES AND SUPPLEMENTATION

IRON

Iron is a very important part of your blood cells, which help carry oxygen to the tissues. It allows your muscles and brain to work properly. Low iron can often make you feel weak and tired all the time.

Meats:

Your body absorbs more iron from meat than any other source. You can add these meats to your rice noodle dish or soup

- Chicken
- Seafood (fish, shrimp and more)
- Red Meat (can exclude cow meat if you wish)
- Pork (unless you are Muslim)

Vegetables and Fruits:

These are all ingredients that could easily be added to fish and noodle soup or to a variety of salads.

Try not to over-cook vegetables as this will lower the nutrition value.

- Dark green leafy vegetables (especially spinach!)
- Dried fruit (raisins and apricots)
- Peas

Carbohydrates:

- Iron-fortified breads, cereals and pastas (there are iron fortified instant noodles)

Help increase iron absorption by also eating these foods (with Vitamin C) at the same time:

- Orange or grapefruit (can do juice)
- Strawberries
- Kiwi
- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Leafy greens
- Melons

Meats:

Can be added soups, noodle dishes, or salads

- Liver (BEST SOURCE)
- Beef
- Chicken
- Fish
- Whole egg

Dairy:

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese

CALCIUM

Calcium is needed to make your bones stronger and to help your muscles stay active.

Seafood:

Can be added to soups or as a dish on its own.

- Salmon
- Shrimp
- Sardines

Fruits and Vegetables:

Add to salads or have as a snack. You can also enjoy the fruits after dinner.

- Broccoli
- Green soy beans
- Kale
- Collard Greens
- Oranges
- Figs

Dairy:

Can use in yogurt-based sauces for foods.

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese

VITAMIN B12

Vitamin B12 is very important to help the body use your nutrients for energy and for other purposes. It also helps your nervous system work properly.

Low B12 can cause fatigue, numbness or tingling in your hands or feet, and memory difficulties.

PROTEIN

Protein helps build cells, body fluids, antibodies and other parts of the immune system. Sometimes proteins are also used for energy. Lack of protein can cause weakness and fatigue, weight loss, hair loss, and increased infections.

Meat:

This is the best source of protein. Can be added to soups, noodle dishes, or as a dish on its own.

- Chicken
- Turkey
- Tuna
- Salmon
- Beef
- Shrimp
- Lamb
- Scallops
- Sardines

Other options:

- Pumpkin seeds (can be added to salads)
- Quinoa (can put in soups instead of rice noodles)
- Greek yogurt
- Eggs
- Spinach (can add to soups or salads)
- Beans (can add to soups or noodle dishes)

FIBER

Fiber is important to help maintain regular bowel movements and prevent constipation and hemorrhoids. Fiber with enough fluid during the day can help your digestion move along easily.

Fruits:

Enjoy after meals as dessert or as snacks.

- Raspberries
- Pear with skin
- Apple with skin
- Banana

Grains, cereal, pasta:

Replace rice noodles with these ingredients.

- Quinoa
- Brown rice
- Whole wheat breads (consider getting brown rice noodles)

Beans, nuts, and seeds:

Can add to soups or salads.

- Split peas
- Lentils
- Black beans
- Lima beans
- Sunflower seeds
- Almonds

Vegetables:

Can add to soups or salads.

- Artichoke
- Green peas
- Broccoli

CONGOLESE DIET CHANGES AND SUPPLEMENTATION

IRON

Iron is a very important part of your blood cells, which help carry oxygen to the tissues. It allows your muscles and brain to work properly. Low iron can often make you feel weak and tired all the time.

Meats:

Your body absorbs more iron from meat than any other source. You can add these meats to your stews

- Red Meat
- Chicken
- Seafood (fish, shrimp and more)
- Pork (unless you are Muslim)

Vegetables and Fruits:

These are all ingredients that could easily be added to a stew or as a side cooked in spices. Try not to over-cook vegetables as this will lower the nutrition value.

- Dark green leafy vegetables (especially spinach – this is like tshitekutaku)
- Dried fruit (raisins and apricots)
- Peas

Carbohydrates:

You can have these breads to dip in your stew.

- Iron-fortified breads, cereals and pastas

Help increase iron absorption by also eating these foods (with Vitamin C) at the same time:

- Orange or grapefruit (can do juice)
- Cassava
- Okra
- Strawberries
- Kiwi
- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Leafy greens
- Melons

Meats:

Can be added to stews.

- Liver (BEST SOURCE)
- Beef
- Chicken
- Fish
- Whole egg

Dairy:

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese

CALCIUM

Calcium is needed to make your bones stronger and to help your muscles stay active.

Seafood:

Can be added to stews.

- Salmon
- Shrimp
- Sardines

Fruits and Vegetables:

Add to your stews or have as a snack. You can also enjoy the fruits after dinner.

- Broccoli
- Green soy beans
- Kale
- Collard Greens
- Oranges
- Figs

Dairy:

Can use in yogurt-based sauces for foods.

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese

VITAMIN B12

Vitamin B12 is very important to help the body use your nutrients for energy and for other purposes. It also helps your nervous system work properly.

Low B12 can cause fatigue, numbness or tingling in your hands or feet, and memory difficulties.

PROTEIN

Protein helps build cells, body fluids, antibodies and other parts of the immune system. Sometimes proteins are also used for energy. Lack of protein can cause weakness and fatigue, weight loss, hair loss, and increased infections.

Meat:

This is the best source of protein. Can be added to stews.

- Chicken
- Turkey
- Tuna
- Salmon
- Beef
- Shrimp
- Lamb
- Scallops
- Sardines

Other options:

- Pumpkin seeds (can be added to stew or eaten as a snack)
- Quinoa (can eat with stew or add to the stew itself)
- Greek yogurt
- Eggs
- Spinach (can add to stew, this is similar to tshitekutaku)
- Beans (add to stew)

FIBER

Fiber is important to help maintain regular bowel movements and prevent constipation and hemorrhoids. Fiber with enough fluid during the day can help your digestion move along easily.

Fruits:

Enjoy after meals as dessert or as snacks.

- Raspberries
- Pear with skin
- Apple with skin
- Banana

Grains, cereal, pasta:

Can eat with stew.

- Quinoa
- Brown rice
- Whole wheat breads (consider adding some wheat flour to the cassava flour in kwanga bread)

Beans, nuts, and seeds:

Can add to stew.

- Split peas
- Lentils
- Black beans
- Lima beans
- Sunflower seeds
- Almonds

Vegetables:

Can add to stew.

- Artichoke
- Green peas
- Broccoli

APPENDIX II

MULTILINGUAL NUTRITION OUTREACH TOOLKITS

Available in:

- Amharic
- Arabic
- Burmese
- English
- Farsi
- French
- Haitian Creole
- Hmong
- Karen
- Kirundi
- Nepali
- Russian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Swahili
- Vietnamese

Includes information on:

- Healthy Food for Healthy Adults
- Breast Milk for Healthy Babies
- Healthy Food for Healthy Children
- Stay Active to Stay Healthy
- Meal time is Family Time
- Maintain a Healthy Weight
- Good Hygiene for Safe Food
- Smart Shopping
- Healthy Weight for My Child
- Maintaining Healthy Weight for Children
- Iron
- Calcium
- Nutrition for Your Pregnancy
- Nutrition for your children under 3 years old
- Reading Nutrition Labels
- Healthy Drinks
- Fast Food
- Healthier Fast Food Choices
- Smart Snacking

Available in PDF formats at:

<http://www.refugees.org/resources/for-refugees--immigrants/health/nutrition/refugee-nutrition-outreach.html>