FOOD NUTRIENTS

Nutrition refers to the way the body uses the food we eat. It implies the food eaten and how it nourishes our body.

Nutrients are the chemical substances in the food we eat. These are carbohydrates, fats and oil, proteins, minerals and vitamins.

Carbohydrate is the particular food nutrient that provides the body with heat and energy for work. Its surplus is usually stored as fat in the body. It is gotten from foods like yam, cassava, rice, maize, bread, sugar, potatoes, etc. Lack of carbohydrates usually leads to lack of energy and tiredness.

Fats and oils is the food nutrient that lubricates the body and serves as a food store in the body. It could be broken down in starvation time to give the body energy. It is gotten from margarine, butter, palm oil, vegetable oil, oily meat, etc. Lack of it leads to dry and rough skin and hair.

Protein is the food nutrient solely responsible for building of body tissues. It also cause growth

and development especially in children and adolescents. It could be gotten from meat, fish, eggs, milk, soybeans, peas, beans, etc. Lack of protein causes poor growth and development and kwashiorkor (in children).

Minerals are not organic food nutrients needed for the proper functioning of the body. They include calcium, iron, iodine, phosphorus, etc. The different mineral elements do different functions in the body. For example, calcium helps in building strong bones and teeth. It could be gotten from green vegetables, sea foods, liver, etc. Lack of minerals affects the proper functioning of the body.

Vitamins are organic minerals, that is, they behave, and work like mineral just that they are organic. Examples are vitamin A, vitamin B, etc. They protect the body from diseases. They help the body to function properly. They could be gotten in fruits, vegetables, egg yolk, codliver oil, etc. Lack of vitamins leads to low immunity, loss of appetite, and weakness.

Water is the universal solvent that is colourless, odourless and tasteless. It aids digestion and is an important constituent of body fluids. Fruits, table water, vegetables and beverages are major sources of water to the body. Lack of water results into dry saliva and rise in body temperature; other body functions would be affected.