

EJURA-SEKYEDUMASE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY.
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SANITATION
ORIENTATION FOR FOOD VENDORS AND SCHOOL FEEDING
CATERERS ON NUTRITION.

Food vendors and caterers need the necessary knowledge and skills to know some basic food nutrition. Periodic food vendors education and orientation gave the Environmental Health Officers the opportunity to also interrupt with food vendors on the need to prepare nutritious diet for customers and the students under the school feeding programme.

Nutritious diet is a food that contains all the food nutrients the body needs to function properly. The food nutrients included carbohydrate, protein, fat, vegetables, vitamins etc.

The target group for this orientation included, food vendors, caterers, cooks, food handlers, chopbars and restaurants operators. The orientation covered the entire Ejura-Sekyedumase Municipality.

Food Vendors and School Feeding Programme Contractors during the 2021 medical screening of food vendors were taken through some orientation on the following topics;

- (i) Balance Diet
- (ii) Adulteration
- (iii) Food poisoning
- (iv) Food hygiene
- (v) Food preservation
- (vi) Fortification

NUTRITIOUS DIET

Nutritious diet is a diet that provides adequate amounts of all the food nutrients and appropriate amount of energy. It contains all the six nutrients which included; carbohydrates, proteins, lipids, vitamins, minerals and water in their right proportions. It was there necessary and important to include all the nutrients in the daily meals prepared for sale to general public to drive the maximum nutrients required for growth.

The participants were educated to include all the food nutrients to help improved the health of the customers and school pupils.

It was explained to them that eating well can also help ward off numerous diseases and health complications as well as help to maintain a healthy body weight, provide energy, allow better sleep and improve brain function.

It is important to not eliminate any essential macronutrients, such as; fats or carbohydrates, but be conscious of proportional control.

They were taught the important of balance diet as followed;

(i) Control body weight

Eating a healthy variety of nutrient-dense foods leaves less room for those calorie-dense foods that typically lead to weight gain.

(ii) Fight off Disease

When eating a balanced diet, essential nutrients will produce and help maintain key germ-fighting cells in the immune system, and greatly improve vascular function.

(iii) Have more energy

The food we eat has a tremendous impact on the energy we have throughout the day. Nutrient-dense food will digest and therefore be released into the system over a longer period of time.

(iv) Brain Power

A proper balance diet helps improve the brain system to think fast and in maturity.

(v) Sleeps better

When a proper diet is consumed, the digestive system will work accurately and provide good end product into the body systems that will help the consumer have a sound and better sleeping.

FOOD ADULTERATION.

Adulteration of food refers to the process of by which the quality of or the nature of a given food is reduced through addition of adulterant or removal of vital substance. Basically during food adulteration small amount of non-nutritious

substance are added intentionally to improve the appearance, texture or storage properties of the food.

During the monitoring of food vendors and caterers it was observed or noticed some food vendors and caterers adulterated food by adding colour, instant powder, Onga, White Maggi, Maggi Cube, etc. There was the need to orient food vendors and caterers to avoid using these artificial spices which have negative health implications. These artificial spices promote non-communicable and cardiovascular diseases which is now the leading cause of most deaths these days. The health of the customers must be taken into consideration.

There are some customers when they eat food from a particular restaurant or chop bar and experience ill health, that customer will never patronize that food again and will also tell other friends about poor food quality at that restaurant or chopbar.

CONTAMINATION OF FOOD

Participants were taken through processes of contamination of food. Food contamination can happen at any stage from delivery, preparation, handling, transportation, and storage to service but the risk factors are associated with food borne diseases and food poisoning originated from human influences. Therefore there is the need to be vigilant when handling food.

In ensuring that wholesome reached the consumers, there was the need for this orientation.

FOOD HYGIENE

The vendors and caterers were oriented on measures and conditions necessary to control hazards and to ensure wholesome for human consumption of a foodstuff taking into account its intended use.

Food hygiene and food safety are important as they ensure that the food vendors handle and produce safe for consumption. If food hygiene and safety are not maintained, the nutritional value may be lost, consumers could become seriously ill with food poisoning and foodborne illnesses.

The food vendors were educated to keep raw and high risk foods separate. They should keep foods out of the temperature danger zone – below 5°C or above 63°C.

The vendors were oriented to make sure that they use tongs or other utensils to make sure that food is handled as little as possible and to keep other raw foods away from foods that could also be contaminated by them.

Effective handwashing is extremely important to help prevent harmful bacteria and other food borne pathogens from spreading to food.

The food vendors were oriented and educated on some of the following;

- ❖ Washing of hands with soap and water before start preparation of food
- ❖ Washing of hands with soap and water every time after using the toilet and before handling of food.
- ❖ Smoking, chewing gum should not be allowed in the food establishments.
- ❖ Spitting, sneezing and coughing should be prohibited.
- ❖ Personal affects like jewelry, watches should not be allowed into the food establishment.
- ❖ Regular wearing of headgear and apron on the food establishments.
- ❖ Trimming of fingers nails and avoid wearing of fingers nails.
- ❖ Forks should be used to pick meat, salad, spaghetti, etc instead of bare hands.

Strict adherence to food hygiene will prevent cross contamination of food and ensure wholesome food is reached the consumer. They were advised not to use their bare hands to serve food as that could lead to food poisoning and cross contamination.

FOOD POISONING

The food vendors were oriented on food poisoning. Food poisoning, also called foodborne illness caused by eating contaminated food. Infectious organisms including bacteria, viruses and parasites or their toxins are the most common cause of food poisoning.

Food vendors were educated that, food poisoning occurs when taken foods that contains bacteria, parasites, viruses, or the toxins made by germs. Most cases are caused by common bacteria such as staphylococcus.

They were oriented on the most common symptoms of food poisoning which includes; nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

According to the facilitator of the programme, if someone has food poisoning, chances are, it won't go undetected. Symptoms can vary depending on the source

of the infection. The length of time it takes for symptoms to appear depends on the person's immune system. It can range from as little as 1 hour to as long as 28 days.

Common cases of food poisoning will typically include at least three of the following symptoms;

- Abdominal cramps
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Mild fever
- Weakness
- Nausea
- Headaches

FOOD PRESERVATION

Food preservation is the process of treating and handling food to stop or greatly slow down spoilage (loss of quality, edibility or nutritive value) caused or accelerated by micro-organisms.

The participants were educated on why food preservation is necessary.

Food preservation prevents large amount of food from being wasted.

They were also taken through the food preservation methods which included;

- ❖ Drying/dehydration
- ❖ Refrigeration and freezing
- ❖ Canning
- ❖ Salting and curing
- ❖ Food additives

The facilitators advised the participants to desist from reheating and long keeping of foods in refrigerators in order to maintain its nutritional value. Food can only be kept in the refrigerator for one week, after that it should not be in use again.

FOOD FORTIFICATION

The food vendors were taking through food fortification. They were advised to add some vitamins and minerals to commonly consumed food during processing to

increase the nutritional values. It is cost effective and safe strategy for improving diet and for the prevention and control of micronutrients deficiencies.

OBSERVATIONS/FINDINGS.

1. It was observed that some food vendors lacked the basic knowledge on nutrition.
2. Some food vendors also overcooked their food thereby destroying the nutrients needed for the body.
3. Some food vendors also kept food in the refrigerator for a longer period of time.
4. Some food vendors lacked basic knowledge on food and personal hygiene.
5. There was no proper food safety measures observed by the food vendors.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

- ❖ All prepare food should contain all the basic nutrition
- ❖ Food vendors should not also overcook their food
- ❖ Food should not be kept in the refrigerators for a long period.
- ❖ Raw foods should be separated from cooked ones in order to prevent cross contamination.
- ❖ Rotten or spoiled food should be discarded immediate.
- ❖ Cook food should be flies-proof to prevent food borne diseases.

CONCLUSION

One thousand three hundred and sixteen (1316) food vendors participated comprised one thousand one hundred and two (1,102) being females while two hundred and fourteen (214) were also males.

The orientation programme was successful and the participants assured the facilitators the knowledge and skills acquired will be put to use to promote their businesses and improve the health conditions of the customers and students.

