

Health Eating in Sri Lanka

ශේගධිය සම්පන්න ආහාර ගැනීම

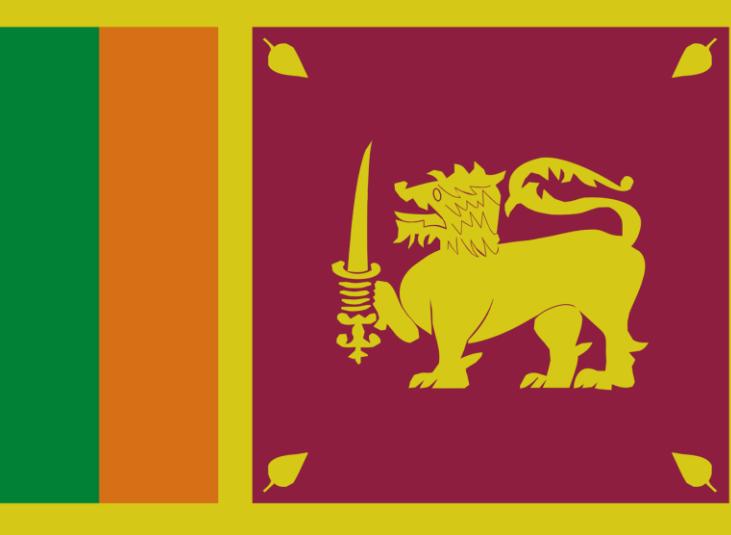


Figure 1

Sri Lankans in Birmingham

- Sri Lankans account for 974 out of the 1.15 million living in Birmingham population (according to 2011 census)^[1]
 - 86.8% of them are aged 15-64
 - Majority Sri Lankans identify as Asian/Asian British ethnicity^[2]

Importance of a Healthy Diet

- A healthy diet protects you from non communicable diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.^[5]
 - Unhealthy diets are linked to 4 out of 10 biggest deaths worldwide including obesity and high blood pressure.^[3]
 - The impacts of poor diets now exceed that of smoking.^[3]
 - Links to Sustainable Development Goal 2 – zero hunger
 - Widespread diet change has occurred due to increased production of processed food, rapid urbanisation and changing lifestyles.^[3]

Sri Lankan Health

- Population - 21.8 million.^[7]
 - Free and decentralised public health system.
 - Divided into 2 streams: community health and curative care.
 - Sri Lankan Ministry of Health responsible for health service development + regulation.^[7]
 - Divided into 9 provinces and 25 districts.
 - Non communicable diseases contributes to nearly 75% deaths.^[7]
 - Double burden of over and under nutrition.^[5,6]
 - Increasing obesity and type 2 diabetes rates especially among adolescents.

Healthy Diet Guidance

Table made using [7, 8, 9, 10, 11]	SRI LANKA	UK
Publication year	-First published food-based guidelines in 2002 -Revised version in 2011	-First food model 1994 -Most recent model, Eatwell Guide, published March 2016
Stakeholder	Nutrition Division of Ministry of Health	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
Food groups	Pyramid split into 6: -Rice, breads, other cereals + yams at base -Fruit + veg -Fish, pulses, meat + eggs -Dairy -Nuts + oils -Fats + sugary products at top	Plate split into 5 -Fruit + veg -Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta + other starchy carbs -Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat + other proteins -Dairy + alternatives -Oils + spreads
Fruit and veg daily	5-8 servings daily	Make up just over 1/3 daily intake
Starchy food/cereals daily	6-11 servings daily Low protein content but provides 50% daily as consume such large quantities	Just over 1/3
School meals provided	No	Yes
Life expectancy	Men – 72 Women – 78.6	Men – 77.2 (Birmingham) 79.5 (England) Women – 81.9 (Birmingham) 83.1 (England)

Both recommend variety daily, drinking 6-8 cups water, consuming less salt, sugar + fats.

Sri Lanka emphasises choosing natural over processed foods

UK also recommends opting for wholegrain

In Sri Lanka guidelines, proteins are seen as a single category, UK has more differentiation between proteins for example, and having fish twice a week, once being oily

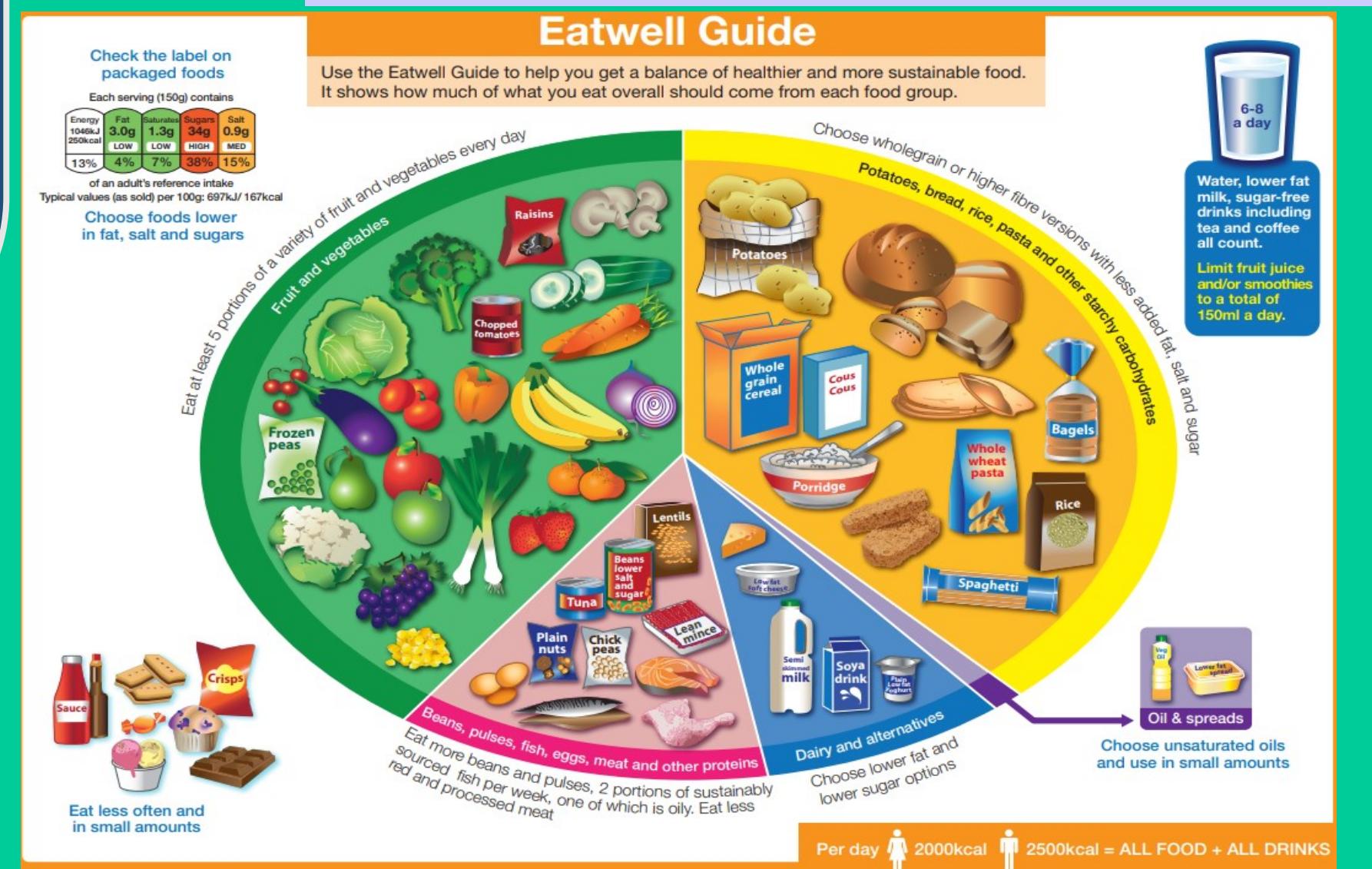


Figure 3 – UK EatWell Plate

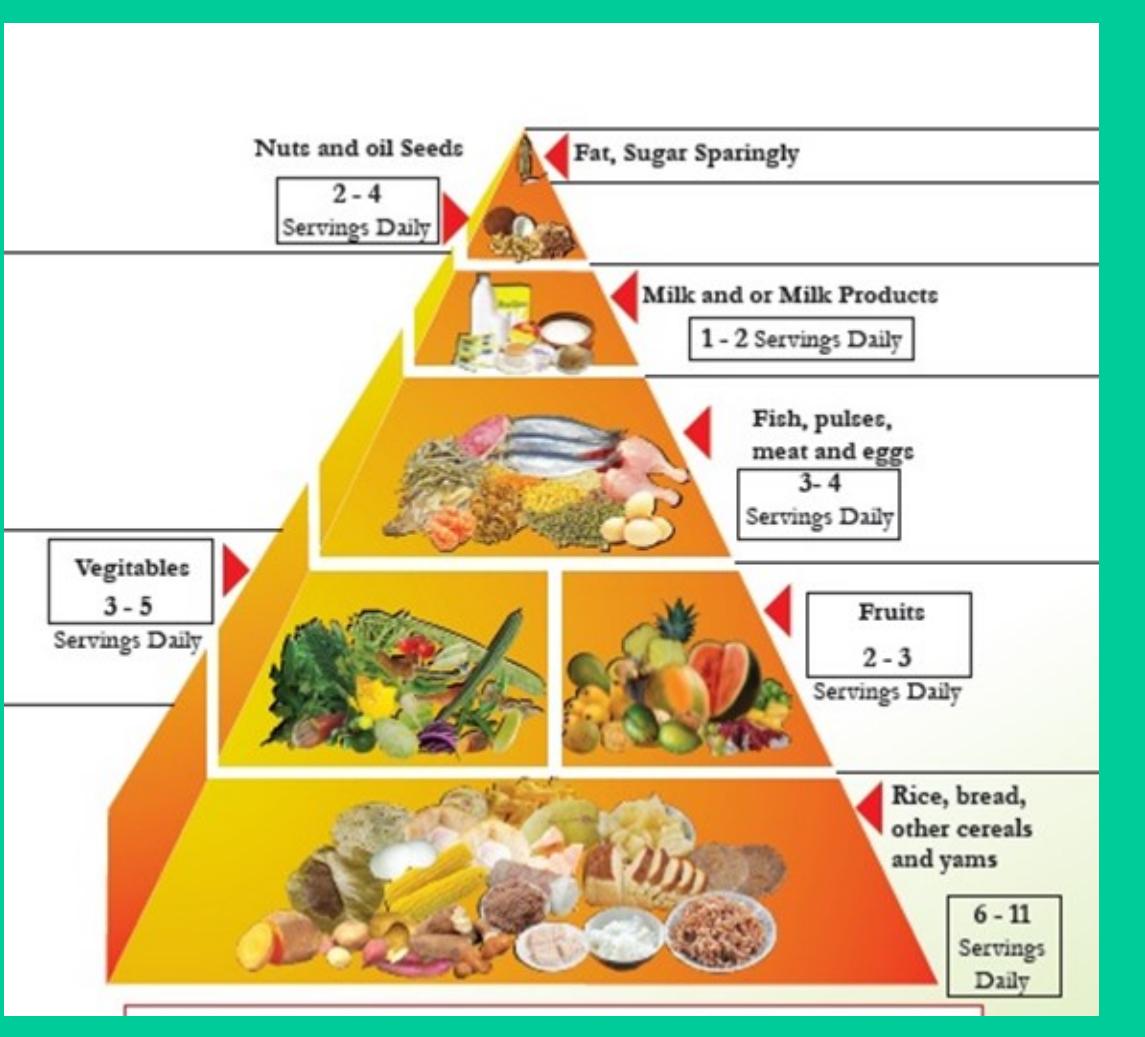


Figure 2 – Sri Lanka Food Pyramid

Highlights from Sri Lanka

School programmes such as implementing story book and sticker-based food diary can educate children on healthy lifestyles in primary schools.^[4]

They are:

- Cost-effective
 - Improve eating habits
 - Allow children to act as agents of change within their families

Highlights from Birmingham

- Provide free healthy school meals.
Authorities should introduce regulation and requirement for nutrition labelling so consumers can make informed decisions on their diet.^[3]

Visit Sri Lankan Restaurants

Coconut Tree Birmingham

A great example of bringing Sri Lankan cuisine to a British city, sharing their heritage whilst being conscious of nutritional guidelines



Figure 4 – Coconut Tree Menu

Conclusions

Although the Sri Lankan population in Birmingham is small, their country of origin has a burden of ill health linked to dietary factors. Therefore, Birmingham should invest and engage in their heritage and be aware of small differences between both national guidelines

By Timna Levinson