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There are many factors that affect people's eating habits. In addition to personal preferences, there are cultural, social, religion, economic, environmental and even political factors.

To start with, every individual has unique likes and dislikes concerning foods. These preferences develop over time and are influenced by personal experiences, such as encouragement to eat, exposure to a food, family customs and rituals, advertising and personal values. For instance, one person may not like fish, despite the fact that it is a family favourite.



Moreover, a cultural group provides guidelines regarding acceptable foods, food combinations, eating patterns and eating behaviours. Compliance with these guidelines creates a sense of identity and belonging for the individual.

Within large cultural groups, subgroups exist that may practice variations of the group's eating behaviours, though they are still considered part of the larger group. For example, a hamburger, French

fries and a soda are considered a typical American meal. Someone who is repeatedly exposed to certain foods is less hesitant to eat them.



The Foods You Choose

- How do these factors influence your decisions?
 - Personal Preferences
 - Cultural Background
 - Time and Convenience
 - Friends
 - The Media



Personal Influences

- lifestyle
- individual preferences
- habits

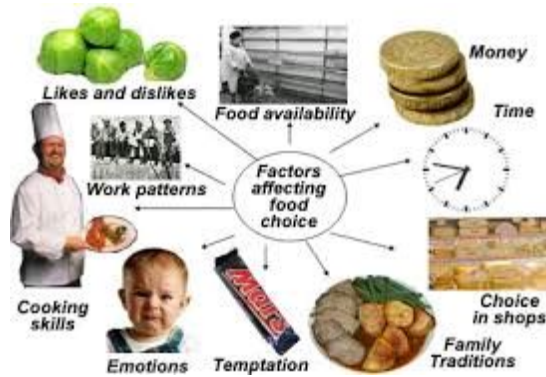
Furthermore, members of a social group depend on each other, share a common culture and influence each other's behaviour and values.

Also, religious reasons affect a follower's food choices and behaviours. For instance, in some religions specific foods are prohibited, such as pork among Jewish and Muslims. Christians have a 40-day Lent, during which they abstain from meat.



Social Influences

- Family
- Cultural/Ethnic Background
- Religious Customs
- Regional Traditions
- Friends
- Media



Factors influencing attitudes to Food

What factors affect what we eat, how much we eat and where we eat.

- Learning and familiarity
- Culture
- Mood



In addition, money, value and consumerism affect what a person purchases. The price of a food, however, is not an indicator of its nutritional value. Cost is a complex combination of a food's availability, status and demand.

Additionally, the influence of the environment is great, due to ecological and social factors. Foods that are commonly and easily grown within a specific region, frequently become part of the local cuisine. However, modern technology, agricultural practices and transportation methods have increased the year-round availability of many foods and foods that were previously available only at certain seasons or in specific areas are now available almost anywhere at any time.

Finally, political factors also influence food availability and trends. Food laws and trade agreements affect what is available in countries and also affect food prices.

Taking all the above into consideration, eating habits are the result of both external factors and internal ones. These habits are formed and may change over a person's lifetime.

Factors That Influence Our Choice Of Food

Health consciousness :

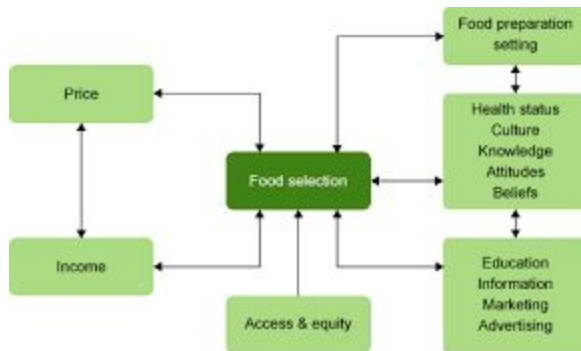
- Knowing about healthy nutrition and it's role on health and wellbeing can help individuals to choose healthier food.
- Constant exposure to health communication material is important to enhance health consciousness.

Money :

- Eating healthy and tasty food within one's budget will help to sustain such habits.

Time :

- Regularity and routine will help to digest and assimilate food better.



Factors affecting balanced diet

- Age
- Environmental factor (temperature)
- Physical activity
- Health condition (Disease / healthy)

Rajesh Choudhary - Health, October 12, 2015



Factors contributing to Eating Disorders

- **Sociocultural values**
 - "Western values" contribute to eating disorders
 - Significantly more common in white Western women than others (worldwide)
 - Everyday interactions with family and peers influence how we feel about our bodies



FOOD AVAILABILITY