NEWS | RESEARCH

"Sweet items and non-veg foods supply more energy"

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By **Guest** | August 16, 2013

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Sweets and non-vegetarian food available on streets supply more energy followed by fried foods, cereal foods and fast foods. The carbohydrate content contributes to higher energy of sweet items while protein and fat of non-vegetarian food contributed more energy.

Similarly the fat, protein and carbohydrate content of fried foods contributed to the energy followed the next order. This is an outcome of a study titled ‘Macronutrient Status of Street Foods’ conducted by a team of scientists from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, (University of Agricultural Science, Bangalore), Mandya, Karnataka, which was published on March 7, 2013 in Journal of Nutrition & Food Sciences.

Dr Kamalabai Koodagi, subject matter specialist (home science) at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, who led the team of researchers -- Mahesha H M, Sanath Kumar V B -- noted that sweet items supplied more energy (311 Kcal) followed by non-vegetarian food (305 Kcal) and least from fast

foods (239 Kcal). The protein and fat content of non-vegetarian food was more followed by fried foods, while cereal foods supplied the least. The carbohydrate content of sweet items was more (49.46 g) followed by fried foods (42.09 g) and lowest from non-vegetarian food (24.08 g). The fried and fast foods supplied more fibre and non-vegetarian and sweet items supplied less fibre in the group.

The study further noted that contribution of energy was highest from sweet items (76 Kcal) followed by fried foods (68 Kcal) and cereal foods (57 Kcal), while lowest from fast foods (37 Kcal). The protein and fat content of fried foods was more. The carbohydrate content of sweet items (12.37 g) and fibre of cereal foods (2.36 g) was found to be on higher side in the street foods.

This study was undertaken to undestand the macro nutrient status of street foods as the street foods with substantial amount of nutrient contribution are also likely to deteriorate in their quality. The street foods provide considerable amount of valuable nutrients, depending on the raw ingredients used.

Street foods are quite common in urban areas. Several varieties of street foods are available to the public and quality of such ready-to-eat food is primarily important from public’s health point of view. The selected (popular) street foods from various categories were subjected to quality analysis during investigation, in Dharwad city (north Karnataka) in terms of nutrients. All the selected street foods differed significantly with respect to macro nutrients.

Street foods are defined as ready to eat food and beverages prepared and sold by vendors on the streets and other similar public places. The popularity of street food vending is spreading rapidly all over the world due to several reasons viz., economic and industrial development followed by tremendous increase in urban population at an average annual growth rate of 4.2%, which is likely to continue in the years to come. Besides an increase in the number of working women over the last decades, from 76.2 to 105.7 million, employment far away from home, modern life style compels both men and women to go to work giving less time to cook at home.

Nevertheless, tremendous growth of small nuclear families has resulted in rapid proliferation of

street foods as these act as convenient source of food. The street food being quickly served, tasty and available at reasonable rates and offering a variety of traditional foods have become an attraction to many customers. Purchase of such ready-to-eat foods often pre-occupied with food price and convenience rather than with food safety, quality and hygiene. Persons who vend street food are often free from taxes, thus selling what they want and few existing regulations on the subject are not usually enforced.

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