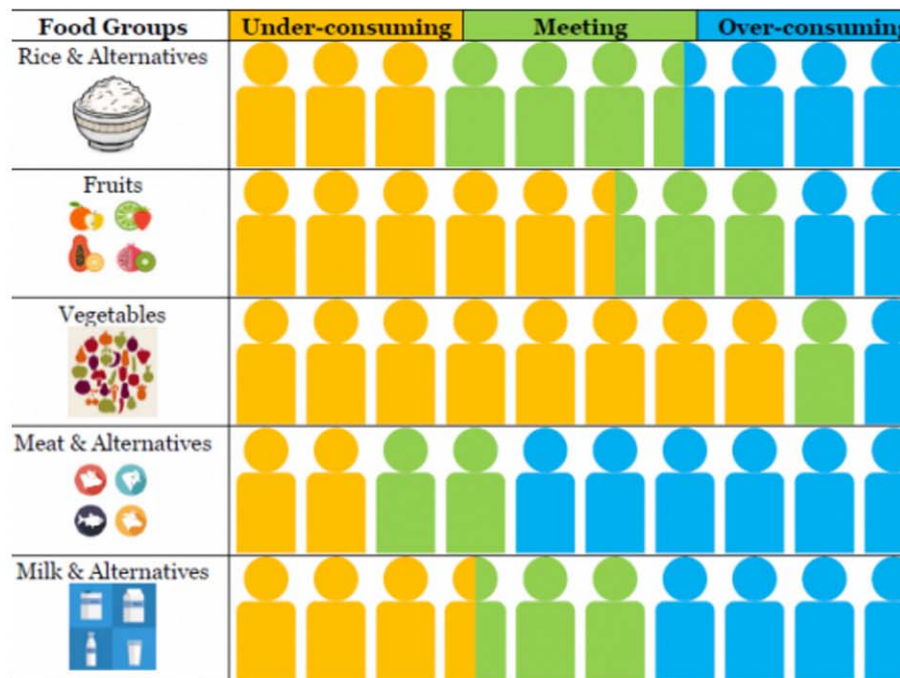


Chinese pre-schoolers in S'pore eating too much meat, too few vegetables and fruit: Abbott



Results of a study supported by Abbott that examines the dietary habits of Chinese pre-schoolers in Singapore. Graphic: Abbott

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SINGAPORE — The diets of Chinese pre-school children in Singapore, despite being varied, are poorly balanced, a new study has found. It also revealed that many are consuming too few vegetables and fruit and too much meat, based on recommendations by the Health Promotion Board.

The study, said to be the first-of-its-kind, was conducted by two students from the National University of Singapore.

Researchers approached the primary caregivers of 70 children of Chinese descent aged three to four to obtain details of their children's dietary habits. Using a 24-hour food recall, they collected information about the amount, type and brand of all food and beverages consumed by the children, as well as the preparation methods of meals served in pre-schools and childcare centres.

The results show that 81.2 per cent of participants consumed less than the daily recommended amount of one serving of vegetables advised by HPB for children aged between three and six. Participants' consumption of fruit was also lower than recommended, with 55.1 per cent consuming less than the recommended one serving a day. However, the study found that close to 60 per cent of participants were consuming more meat than the recommended daily amount of one serving.

The study also examined the nutritional differences between diets that incorporate milk that is supplemented and those that incorporate whole milk and reduced-fat milk. It said that children drinking growing-up milk benefitted from additional nutrients, such as omega-6, vitamin D, iron, lutein and folate, while those on a diet comprising whole milk and reduced milk would not meet "the recommended intake for omega-6, folate and vitamin D".

The study was sponsored by an educational grant from Abbott, a healthcare company that produces several supplements aimed at children, such as Similac Gain, a line of nutritional milk.