

**NUTRITION EVALUATION OF TWO TRADITIONAL SRI LANKAN  
WEANING FOODS**

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A Chemical evaluation was carried out of two traditional weaning foods in Sri Lanka, namely leaf gruel (Kola Kanda) and plain gruel (Lunu Kanda). Leaf gruel is normally prepared with rice, coconut milk and the juice of leaves such as Indian pennywort (Gotukola) while plain gruel contains only rice and salt. An evaluation of the nutrient content (energy, protein, fat, ash, minerals eg. iron, zinc and vitamins such as  $\beta$  carotene, B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub> , C and the amino acid contents) in the individual raw materials used in these gruels (brown country rice, Oryza sativa, coconut, cocos nucifera and gotukola, Centilla asiatica ) as well as the prepared gruels was done. The traditional procedures at village level were adopted to laboratory conditions in the preparation of gruels. The nutrient content of green gram Phaseolus aureus , cow pea Vigna catjang and sprats Engraulidae were also analysed to see if they could be used to enhance the nutrient quality of the gruels.

Results obtained indicated that lunu kanda had a very low energy and nutrient density; whereas one feed of kola kanda (approx 1 cup) can provide approximately 1/3rd of the nutrient requirements for infants (WHO/FAO/UNU 1985) of 6-12 months. There seems to be no remarkable loss of nutrients due to cooking except in the case of vitamin C.

In the kola kanda, the isoleucine, lysine and sulphur containing amino acids in the leafy juice and coconut milk, supplement the amino acids found in the rice. Addition of approximately 10 g of green gram, cow pea or sprats to one feed of kola kanda can significantly increase the energy, protein, iron and zinc contents of the gruel, but sprats is the best.

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