



# Partners in Quality Care



## Objectives:

- ✓ General concepts of nutrition
- ✓ Review of Nutrients
- ✓ Nutrition and Aging

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## References:

[https://info.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/hcpr/curriculum/pdf/72\\_Module%2014%20Nutrition%20Script\\_Final.pdf](https://info.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/hcpr/curriculum/pdf/72_Module%2014%20Nutrition%20Script_Final.pdf)

<https://medlineplus.gov/definitions/nutritiondefinitions.html>

<https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms/def/nutrition>

Mosby's Textbook for Nursing Assistants tenth edition chapter 30 Nutrition Needs

## **NUTRITION**

Nutrition is the taking in and use of food and other nourishing material by the body. Nutrition is a 3-part process. First, food or drink is consumed. Second, the body breaks down the food or drink into nutrients. Third, the nutrients travel through the bloodstream to different parts of the body where they are used as "fuel" and for many other purposes. To give the body proper nutrition, a person must eat and drink enough of the foods that contain key nutrients. Nutrients are substances in foods that our bodies need so they can function and grow. They include carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and water. Nutrition is about eating a healthy and balanced diet. Food and drink provide the energy and nutrients a person needs to be healthy. Nutrition is a critical part of health and development. Malnutrition, in every form, presents significant threats to human health.

For the human body to continue to grow normal cells, maintain normal functioning of all systems, and have energy for activities, a well-balanced diet is needed. It is also important to remember that each person is unique and cannot be compared to other people of the same age or condition. Nutritional status is based on a person's body composition, functional status, and the presence of illness or disease and is unique to each person. A poor diet and poor eating habits:

- Increase the risk for disease and infection
- Cause chronic illness to become worse
- Cause healing problems
- Increase the risk for accidents and injuries

Factors such as culture, finances, and personal choice affect dietary habits. Selecting, preparing and serving food are part of dietary practices. Some people may prefer their main meal at mid-day. The five food groups are listed below, and the amount needed from each food group depends on age, biological sex, and physical activity.

- Grains- grains are foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or other cereal grains. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples.
- Vegetables- vegetables can be raw, cooked, fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or juiced. If canned choose the low sodium variety. Use alternate choices such as spices to flavor food rather than salt.
- Fruits- fruits may be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. Avoid fruits canned in syrup as syrup contains added sugar.
- Dairy- All fluid milk products are part of the dairy group as well as many foods made from milk such as yogurt and cheese. Low fat or fat free choices are best.
- Proteins- All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, processed soy products, nuts and seeds are protein foods. Beans and peas are in this group and the vegetable group. For healthy choices, choose lean or low-fat meat and poultry. Avoid fat for cooking. Seafood like salmon, trout, and herring may reduce heart disease risk.

## **NUTRITION**

Having a healthy eating routine is important as a person gets older. Getting a mix of healthy foods is important for health and can help with chronic disease management. No food or food group has every essential nutrient. A well-balanced diet ensures an adequate intake of essential nutrients.

- Protein- the most important nutrient, protein is needed for tissue growth and repair. Sources include meat, fish, poultry, eggs, milk and milk products, cereals, beans, peas, and nuts.
- Carbohydrates- provide energy and fiber for bowel elimination. Sources are fruits, vegetables, breads, cereals, and sugar. Dietary fiber is found in plant foods, fiber is not digested. It provides the bulk for elimination. Sugars are broken down by the body into glucose which is used for energy.
- Fats provide energy. They add flavor and help the body use certain vitamins. Unneeded dietary fat is stored as body fat. Some fats are healthy, and others are not. Fats from salmon, avocados, and olive oil are healthy fats. Unhealthy fats usually come from animal sources such as meat and dairy foods or are processed foods made from vegetable oils. Desserts and baked goods, many cheeses, ice cream, and whole milk also contain fat. Solid fats are solid at room temperature such as lard, shortening, and stick margarine. Fats affect cholesterol (a soft waxy substance found in the bloodstream and all body cells) levels. When certain cholesterol levels are high, the risk for heart disease increases. Eating less unhealthy fats can improve cholesterol and lower the risk for heart disease.
- Vitamins are needed for certain body functions. The body stores Vitamins A, D, E, and K. Vitamins C and the B complex vitamins are not stored. They must be ingested daily. The lack of a certain vitamin results in illness. Common vitamins are vitamin A, vitamins B1 (thiamin), B2 (riboflavin), B3 (niacin), B12, Folate (folic acid), vitamins C (ascorbic acid), D, E, and vitamin K.
- Minerals- are needed for bone and tooth formation, nerve and muscle function, fluid balance, and other body processes. Foods containing calcium help prevent musculo-skeletal changes. Common minerals are calcium, phosphorus, iron, iodine, sodium, and potassium.
- Water is needed for all body processes and is needed to live. Water is ingested through fluids and foods. Water is lost through urine, stool, and vomit. Water is also lost through the skin with perspiration and the lungs with expiration. Hydration means having an adequate amount of water in body tissues. Infants and young children have more body water than adults do. Excess fluid losses cannot be tolerated. They quickly cause death in an infant or child. The amount of body water decreases with age. So does the thirst sensation. Older people need water but may not feel thirsty. Offer water often. Older people are at risk for diseases affecting fluid balance. Examples include heart disease, kidney disease, cancer, and diabetes. Some drugs cause the body to lose fluids. Others cause the body to retain water. Dehydration (a decrease in the amount of water in body tissues) and edema (the swelling of body tissues with water) are risks. Some people may have special fluid orders, be sure to follow the plan of care for your clients.

**Some changes that can happen as a person ages can make it harder to eat healthy. These include changes in their:**

- **Home life, such as suddenly living alone or having trouble getting around**
  - **Health, which can make it harder for an older person to cook or feed themselves**
  - **Medicines, which can change how food tastes, make a person's mouth dry, or take away their appetite**
  - **Income, which means that they may not have as much money for food**
  - **Sense of smell and taste**
  - **Problems chewing or swallowing their food**
- ✓ **Notify your supervisor of any of these changes in your client (s) that make it difficult for them to eat healthy**

**NUTRITION:**

A mechanically altered diet requires a change in the texture of food or liquids (e.g., soft solids, ground meat, pureed food or thickened liquids). A therapeutic diet or modified diet is a specific diet ordered for a person because of illness, condition, or preparation for a procedure (e.g., low cholesterol, low sodium (salt), low carbohydrate). Follow the client's plan of care for any type of therapeutic diet requirements. Ask your supervisor for any education for requirements for any therapeutic or modified diet. According to the American Diabetes Association everyone's body responds differently to different types of foods and diets, so there is no single "magic" diet for diabetes. But a person can follow a few simple guidelines to find out what works for them to help manage their blood sugar. One of the key takeaways is that many different eating patterns can help a person manage their diabetes-from Mediterranean to low-carbohydrate to vegetarian. Whatever a person chooses, they should be sure to include lots of non-starchy vegetables, minimize added sugars and refined grains, and choose whole, minimally processed foods.

Nonstarchy vegetables are lower in carbohydrates, so they do not raise blood sugar very much. They are also high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber, making them an important part of a healthy diet. Filling half your plate with nonstarchy vegetables means you will get plenty of servings of these superfoods. Foods high in protein such as fish, chicken, lean beef, soy products, and cheese are all considered "protein foods." Proteins foods (especially those from animal sources) usually contain saturated fat, which may increase a person's risk of heart disease. Lean proteins are lower in fat and saturated fat, making them a healthier choice. Some plant-based protein foods (like beans and legumes) are also high in carbohydrates. You can assist your clients and provide encouragement to follow any nutritional guidelines they have been prescribed by their health care provider.

**Nutrition and Eating Healthy with Aging Include:**

- Eat foods that give lots of nutrients without a lot of extra calories, such as
    - Fruits and vegetables (choose different types with bright colors)
    - Whole grains, like oatmeal, whole-wheat bread, and brown rice
    - Fat-free or low-fat milk and cheese, or soy or rice milk that has added vitamin D and calcium
    - Seafood, lean meats, poultry, and eggs
    - Beans, nuts, and seeds
  - Avoid empty calories. These are foods with lots of calories but few nutrients, such as chips, candy, baked goods, soda, and alcohol.
  - Pick foods that are low in cholesterol and fat. You especially want to try to avoid saturated and trans fats. Saturated fats are usually fats that come from animals. Trans fats are processed fats in stick margarine and vegetable shortening. You may find them in some store-bought baked goods and fried foods at some fast-food restaurants.
  - Drink enough liquids, so you don't get dehydrated. Some people lose their sense of thirst as they age. And certain medicines might make it even more important to have plenty of fluids.
  - Be physically active. If you have started losing your appetite, exercising may help you to feel hungrier.
- ✓ Review the USDA My Plate information on healthy eating choices at this link, think about your key takeaways from the information in these guidelines:

[https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/DGA\\_2020-2025\\_StartSimple\\_withMyPlate\\_English\\_BW.pdf](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/DGA_2020-2025_StartSimple_withMyPlate_English_BW.pdf)

If you are preparing food, *food safety* is particularly important to protect yourself and your client from harmful germs. You can view this fun food safety music video-*Don't Get Sick Wit It – Animation*, at this link: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbH\\_mSk2dNk&feature=relmfu](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbH_mSk2dNk&feature=relmfu)