

# **The Aging Process and Optimal Nutrition Care**

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## Objectives:

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- Identify physical and cognitive signs of aging
- Identify factors for consideration when assessing nutrition status of ADC clients
- Discuss essential nutrients for adults

# Three Areas of Physical Changes:

- Body Composition
- Senses
- Organ Systems



# Changes in Body Composition

- Muscle strength is lost
- Bones become fragile
- Reaction rates are slower
- Falls and injuries are more likely
- Fewer calories are needed to maintain body weight

# Changes in Senses: Taste & Smell

- Sweet foods tasting bitter
- Sour foods tasting metallic
- Salty foods tasting bland
- Lacking sense of smell will decrease appetite
- All the more reason to aim for pleasant food aromas



# Changes in Senses: vision & hearing

- Poor sight and poor hearing may lead to –
- A lack of interest in eating
- Problems following verbal directions



# Changes in Senses: Touch

- Loss of touch impacts-
- Ability to pick up food or utensils
- Ability to sense food temperatures

Results - more spills  
more burns



# Changes in Organ Systems: Mouth and Throat

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- Missing Teeth
- Poor Fitting Dentures
- No teeth at all
- Difficulty swallowing due to disease or medicines



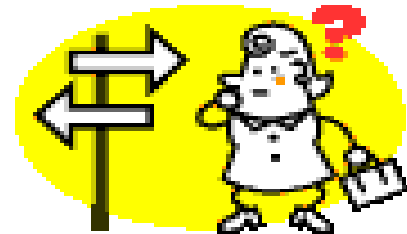
# Changes in Organ Systems: GI Tract

- Changes in the stomach can lead to difficult digestion
- Poor muscle tone in the esophagus may allow food from the stomach to reflux, causing heartburn or indigestion
- Slow movement of food through the intestines can lead to constipation

**All of these can lead to poor appetite**

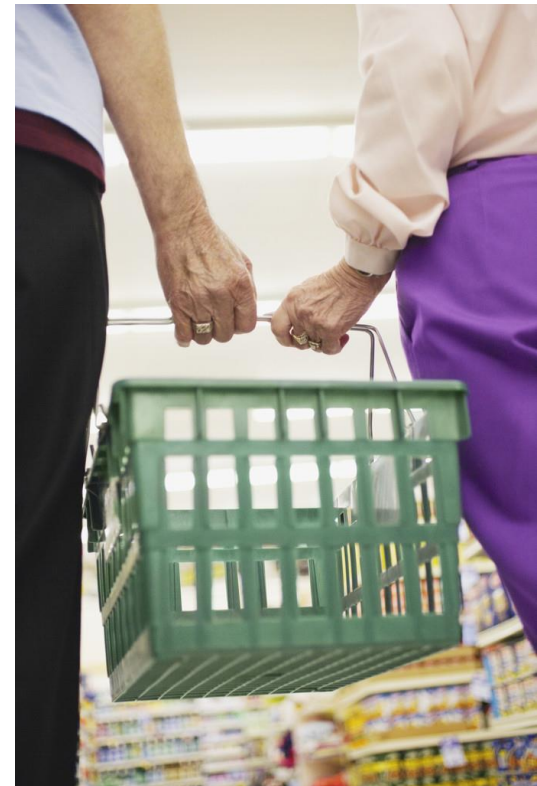
# Changes in Cognition:

- Decline at varying rates - slowly or dramatically
- May be caused by periods of illness or medications
- Confusion or Agitation at meal time



# Nutrition Needs of ADC Clients

- Unique for each client
- Influenced by sensory losses, oral health problems, illness or disabilities, medications
- A nourished body can improve overall health and help maintain independence!!



# Assess Nutrition Status

**Why?** For meeting individual needs

**Purpose?** To Identify and Treat nutritional problems

**A problem of poor nutritional status can affect all other aspects of the client's life and vice versa.**

# Assess Nutrition Status

- ❖ Food likes
- ❖ Food dislikes
- ❖ Food allergies
- ❖ Cultural or religious dietary requirements
- ❖ Dental problems
- ❖ Chewing or swallowing problems
- ❖ Medical conditions and medications requiring special diets

***Considering these factors can help prevent or treat problems of poor nutrition.***

# DETERMINE: Warning Signs

- **D**isease
- **E**ating Poorly
- **T**ooth Loss/Mouth Pain
- **E**conomic Hardship
- **R**educed Social Contact
- **M**ultiple Medications
- **I**nvoluntary Weight Loss/Gain
- **N**eed of Assistance in Self Care
- **E**lder Years Above Age 80



# DETERMINE Checklist

- Developed by the Nutrition Screening Initiative (NHI)
- NHI recommends: a client should be seen by a doctor, RD or other healthcare professional for interventions to improve eating habits and lifestyle when the score is 3 or higher.

# Essential Nutrients for Adults

- Carbohydrates, Protein and Fat= Energy
- Older adults are more likely to develop protein malnutrition than younger adults
- Bodies are more easily injured and require protein to repair the tissues





# Essential Nutrients for Adults

- Older adults tend to absorb and utilize some vitamins and minerals less efficiently due to normal aging and medications.
- Requirements of vitamins and minerals may be greater!



# Essential Nutrients for Adults

## FIBER

- Naturally found in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes
- Constipation can be caused by inactivity, poor diet, inadequate fluid intake or medications

# Essential Nutrients for Adults

## FLUIDS

- Many older adults do not feel thirsty
- The caregiver must take responsibility

## How?

- Encourage a cup between meals
- Offer frozen juice bars, fruit slush or smoothies as part of an **activity**
- Offer decaffeinated
- Monitor swallowing

# Is nutrition status part of the Individualized Plan of Care ?

- Identify goals and interventions to treat problems or maintain strengths
- Implement strategies
- Evaluate the outcomes



# Kellog's Rice Krispy Treats

- Creditable towards the grain/bread requirement at snack, but only in the following amounts:
- .78 oz/22 gram bar = .25 grain/bread serving
- 1.3 oz/37 gram bar = .5 grain/bread serving
- 1.6 oz/45 gram bar = .75 grain/bread serving
- 1.7 oz/48 gram bar = .75 grain/bread serving

# Kraft Velveeta Cheese is not creditable

- It is a “processed cheese product”
- Any item labeled with the wording “imitation” cheese or cheese “product” is not creditable towards meal pattern requirements.
- Review the Food Buying Guide, footnote #14 on page 1-23.

**[www.fns.usda.gov/tn/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/)**

**Click on Resource Library on left hand side**

**Click on Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition  
Programs**