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Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

Caregiver Assistance News

"CARING FOR YOU...CARING FOR OTHERS"

Nutrition - Forgetting to Eat

Older adults are more susceptible to malnutrition because the stomach empties more slowly in later years, and the sight, smell and taste that used to make eating so enjoyable are diminished. Additionally, factors such as poor mobility, dental health, trouble swallowing, money worries, chronic illness and medication and mental health can contribute. To fight malnutrition, the first step is to find the root cause.

The ability of a person with Alzheimer's disease (AD) to make good food choices, to use utensils correctly, to chew and swallow his food, and to sit at the table changes over the course of the illness. People with AD need more and more help eating as time passes.

At all stages mealtimes should be pleasant and can offer a social opportunity. They are a key time of the day. Allow plenty of time for each meal—a minimum of 30–45 minutes. In the *early stage* you may not need to do anything special when preparing food, but may need to help with choosing a healthy diet. People with Alzheimer's can continue to eat without help for quite a while, but eventually they will begin to need help.

People with dementia seem to have a sweet tooth. Ice cream and other treats can be used to encourage them to finish a meal or other activities. Place acceptable treats where they

can be found easily and restricted items out of sight.

In the *middle stage*, people need help choosing appropriate food. On their own, they may eat only food that is not healthy or is unsuitable for any medical conditions they may have. You don't want to become the food police and say "no" all the time, so keep items that are good for the person to eat readily available. When offering food, don't clutter the plate. When necessary, cut food into bite-size pieces. If the person wants to eat with his fingers, offer finger food. Be aware that people in this stage may add too much salt or pepper to their food by mistake or put sugar rather than salt on a hamburger.

People may be easily distracted while eating, so keep the environment calm. Turn off the television. Put music on the radio rather than a talk show. Sometimes, toward the end of the middle stage, people enjoy being fed even though they may still be able

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to feed themselves. They may not want this help all the time.

In the more severe stage you will have to pureé all the food and feed the person all the time. Be sure the person is sitting up straight enough so he will not choke. In the very end stage some people may want to drink from a bottle. This may be an effective way of feeding them.

Eating Right on a Budget

Are you spending more than you realize on food and drinks that don't have nutritional value? Write down everything you buy and eat over a three-day period and evaluate the list. What had little or no nutritional value and was expensive, such as a daily drink from a coffee chain, sugared cereals, or soft drinks?

It is healthiest and cheapest to cook meals at home that include vegetables, protein and whole grains such as brown rice. These foods will save money and give you better health than eating at fast food restaurants.

Try the following resources:

- Look in the yellow pages for your regional food bank, which can provide free emergency food boxes.
- To find out if you're eligible for food stamps, visit the USDA Food and Nutrition Service website. It will direct you to phone numbers for each state for food stamps. It also offers a questionnaire to determine if you might be eligible.

Shopping and cooking tips to help you with your food budget:

- Buy in bulk, even if only cooking for two. Use freezer bags and separate meat in meal-size portions. Defrost a portion for each meal.
- Make a large pot of soup or a casserole and freeze it in individual portions. Defrost and use for dinner throughout the week.
- You only need about four ounces of protein at a meal for a complete serving—the size of a deck of cards.
- Avoid buying any products with added sugar—cereals, drinks, etc. juices, etc. They are expensive and add empty calories.
- Beans are nutritious and inexpensive, and they go a long way.
- A box of oatmeal is more filling than sweetened cereal.

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Taking Care of Yourself— Breast Cancer Check-up Reminder

Breast cancer will strike more than 200,000 times this year and claim more than 40,000 lives. The early detection of cancer saves lives, however caregivers are prone to ignore caring for themselves because of a hectic schedule. There are three parts to breast examination: self-examination, the physician examination, and mammography. To minimize your chances of breast cancer you need all three. Most lumps in the breast are not cancer. The breast self-examination should be practiced regularly and is the most important. Practice self-care. Be sure to have a physician exam regularly and schedule your yearly mammogram.

Source: American Cancer Society

Pacing

Be aware that people who pace a great deal use lots of calories and may need to have several snacks during the day to keep their weight up.

Live Life Laughing!

For the holidays, my doctor put me on a Mistletoe diet. All the foods I like, I have to kiss-off.

Inspiration

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit.

And wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

Memory Care

Since people with AD are easily distracted, if necessary, face his chair away from distractions. Soft music can help set a calm mood.

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Are you a Caregiver and struggling with balancing it all?
You are NOT alone!

Noyes Caregiver Resource Center assists family caregivers who are caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's, dementia, or other chronic health conditions.

Support Services Include:

- Information and Assistance
- Caregiver Support Groups
- Respite Care: in-home or day program options
- Powerful Tools for Caregivers: 6-week educational program
- Alzheimer's & Dementia Education/Resources
- Annual Caregiver Conference: November 17th, 2018
- Monthly Caregiver Newsletter

To request assistance or information,
call **585-335-4358** or
email **caregiver@noyeshealth.org**

Caregiver Resource Center

UR MEDICINE | NOYES HEALTH

http://www.noyes-health.org/senior-services/caregiver-resources

The Noyes Caregiver Resource Center is funded by the Livingston County Office for the Aging

Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

Ordering Info

From the publishers of

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SAFETY TIPS– Living Alone

In the early stage of Alzheimer's, people's eating habits usually do not change. When changes do occur, living alone may not be safe anymore. Look for these signs to see if living alone is no longer safe for the person with Alzheimer's:

★ The person forgets to eat.

★ Food has burned because it was left on the stove.

★ The oven isn't turned off.

Other difficulties, such as not sitting down long enough for meals and refusing to eat, can arise in the middle and late stages of the disease. These changes can lead to poor nourishment, dehydration, abnormally low blood pressure, and other problems.

Caregivers should monitor the person's weight and eating habits to make sure he or she is not eating too little or too much. Other things to look for include appetite changes, the person's level of physical activity, and problems with chewing or swallowing. Talk with the person's doctor about changes in eating habits.

NEXT ISSUE... MENTAL HEALTH – AVOIDING BURNOUT

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QUICK QUIZ

When it comes to nutrition, the elderly are an especially vulnerable population. Malnutrition in the elderly does not discriminate between race, gender or socioeconomic status. *All* elderly people can be at risk of declining nutrition. Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.

1. Be aware that people who pace a great deal use lots of calories and may need to have several snacks during the day to keep their weight up.
T F

2. Older adults are not more susceptible to malnutrition.
T F

3. If left to choose food on their own, people with Alzheimer's will always make good food choices.
T F

4. If a person is fed while not sitting up, he can choke.
T F

5. Avoid buying any products with sugar added – cereals, desserts, juices, etc. They are expensive and add empty calories.
T F

6. Sometimes, toward the end of the middle stage, people enjoy being fed even though they may still be able to feed themselves.
T F

7. If the person wants to eat with his fingers, discourage it, so they learn how to use utensils properly.
T F

8. Poor dental health can lead to malnutrition.
T F

9. A four ounce serving of protein at a meal is about the size of a deck of cards.
T F

10. Since people with Alzheimer's are easily distracted, if necessary, face their chair away from distractions such as a TV.
T F

Name_____

Signature_____ Date_____

KEY: 1. T; 2. F; 3. F; 4. T; 5. T; 6. T; 7. F; 8. T; 9. T; 10. T

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