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Assessing nutritional needs of older adults

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Common ailments associated with growing old are directly linked to types of food and beverage consumed. Specifically, we will focus on improving cognitive functioning through diet; exploring various modalities such as essential oils and the acid-alkaline diet. Changes associated with normal aging increase nutritional risk for seniors. Aging is symbolized by a weakened organ system. Age related changes related to nutrition include: Xerostomia declining production of saliva. There is an increase in gastric acid secretion which can limit intake of iron and vitamin B12. Peristalsis is slower, and constipation can be an issue because fluid intake decreases. Sarcopenia is the loss of lean muscle mass usually indicated by loss of strength, functional decline and endurance. Two nutritional screening tools appropriate to assess older adults are the mini nutritional assessment and the short nutritional assessment questionnaire. These tools will identify seniors at risk for malnutrition. Since there are two out of four seniors at

risk of becoming malnourished addressing older adult nutritional challenges is of utmost importance.

Biography

Cassandra Hill has completed her Internship at the Area Agency on Aging. She has completed her Bachelor's degree in Social Work in 2004 earning several national recognitions such as National Dean's List and All American Collegiate Scholar; Master's degree in Gerontology completing a thesis on "How Does Place of Residence Affect Depression among Seniors" in 2006. Her career experience includes hospice, geriatric psychiatry and at a long-term acute care hospital. She is very active in volunteering with non-profit organizations. Currently, she is on the Advisory Committee of the Alzheimer's Cure Foundation; serving on the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging for the state of Arkansas. She also owns and operates Holistic Living Consulting LLC, a wellness consulting business, helping individuals on their path to healthy living.

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