

In-Service Speaking Points

Audience: Dining Associates

Topics: Liberalized Diet & Hydration

With any LTC facility, our population consists of elderly residents that are at high risk for poor nutritional intake and dehydration. This occurs for various reasons whether it's generalized weakness, fatigue, fear of having an accident, altered mental status, or there could be additional reasons. This is also a population that has had a lifetime of independence and making their own decisions, and now have lost much of their independence and are reliant on others for decision making. It is important for this population to have choices and make as many decisions on their own as possible, while we ensure they have adequate nutritional intake and hydration. I will first discuss the importance of providing adequate nutritional intake with a liberalized diet, and then providing adequate hydration.

Liberalized Diet

1. Why is it important to have a liberalized diet?
 - a. A person-centered care culture provides food and dining experiences that provide individualized care and self-directed living.
 - i. This is done by ensuring the resident has dignity and the independence to make their own decisions with their food and dining experience.
 - ii. It gives them quality of life and quality of care.
 - b. Liberalized Diet – associated with increased food and beverage intake as it encourages the person to eat foods they like, provide the ability to make their own decisions to eat what they want and like. Leads to adequate nutrition intake and weight maintenance.
 - c. Includes –
 - i. Offering choices of what to eat, where to eat, who to eat with, when to eat, how long to eat
 - ii. If resident does not have choices or reduced choices, it would be considered “harm” to the resident.

2. What if a resident is on a modified diet?
 - a. Mechanically Altered/Modified Texture Diet -
 - i. important to provide an appealing meal to these residents for continued nutrient intake, and pleasure and dignity in eating foods.
 - ii. If a resident is on a pureed diet, the individual may be more prone to eat foods that are naturally of a pureed consistency (ie – mashed potatoes, pudding, yogurt) over a pureed or artificially thickened food).
 - iii. This population often has an increased need for eating assistance, a decreased enjoyment of eating, reduced food intake, weight loss, and at increased risk for malnutrition and dehydration which can lead to further illness such as UTIs.

3. How not eating enough affects the person:
 - a. Weight Loss and possible malnutrition –
 - i. Adversely affects the quality and length of life
 - ii. Associated with poor health and recovery outcomes; such as -
 1. development of pressure ulcers
 2. increased risk of infection
 3. functional decline
 4. cognitive decline
 5. increased risk of death
 - iii. Malnutrition is one of the most serious issues faced with residents in LTC
4. Flavorful and Appealing Foods –
 - a. Elderly population may have –
 - i. reduced ability to taste,
 - ii. dentures or partials that may be ill-fitting,
 - iii. reduced vision,
 - iv. reduced ability to feel things accurately
 - b. Improving taste is one of the best and simplest ways of improving nutrition
 - c. Need to provide foods that have consistency and texture, allowing for comfortable chewing and swallowing
 - d. Variety of colors, shapes, textures of food
 - e. Familiar foods
 - f. Discuss with residents what foods they like
 - g. Resident satisfaction with the quality of the food and the dining experience should be a #1 priority!

Hydration & UTIs in Elderly Population –

Elderly population is at increased risk for dehydration and UTIs. What can we do to help reduce their risk?

1. Elderly Residents
 - a. Have decreased mobility, an aged body with decreased organ function and muscle strength, and decreased immune function
 - b. Issues with: incontinence, constipation, UTIs, PUs
 - c. Reduced intake for fear of not making it to the restroom
 - d. At higher risk for dehydration
2. Fluid Intake Affects –
 - a. Weight
 - b. Urine output
 - c. Heart rate
 - d. Blood pressure
 - e. Respiratory rate
 - f. Eyes
 - g. Level of Consciousness
 - h. Other general S/S: dry eyes/decreased tears, cracked lips, loss of appetite, sudden change in mental status, constipation
3. Why are they at increased risk for dehydration?
 - a. Decreased intake of fluid for fear of not making it to restroom in time
 - b. Dementia
 - c. Dependence on staff for feeding/drinking
 - d. Depression
 - e. medications
4. What is a UTI? Importance of fluids?
 - a. UTI = Urinary Tract Infection
 - i. Infection
 - ii. Can have painful and/or burning with urination
 - iii. Frequent urination or feel the need to urinate frequently
 - iv. Bacteria can travel to kidneys or become septic
 - b. Elderly population at increased risk d/t ailments and weakened immune system d/t age that make them more prone to UTIs.
 - c. Elderly population frequently have the tendency to decrease fluid intake d/t embarrassing bladder control issues. As a result, less water intake means less frequent urination. The urine is therefore held in the bladder longer, fostering bacteria growth and turning into a UTI. As men and women continue to have continued weakening of the bladder and pelvic muscles, the individual retains more urine and experiences increasing incontinence.
 - d. Common illnesses experienced by the elderly population adds to the holding of urine – such as diabetes, kidney infections, and kidney stones – in addition to the muscles and organs not working as efficiently.

- e. Once an infection has started in the urinary system, it can quickly work its way up to the kidneys. It can eventually make its way to the blood, resulting in sepsis which an infection that has spread into other parts of the body and can be very dangerous.
 - f. Water is important to not for hydration, but also to help flush bacteria out of the urinary tract routinely
5. Ways to Encourage Hydration –
- a. Dining Services will provide each resident a glass of water at their place setting for every meal
 - b. Water stations should be filled
 - c. Offer water to residents as you walk through the facility; even if it's just a little bit of water or juice at any time
 - d. Fluids are to be offered to the residents at all activities (group or one-on-one activities)
 - e. Offer water to bed-ridden residents
 - f. Encourage family involvement in increasing fluid intake
6. What is included as a fluid –
- a. Any liquid when at room temperature
 - b. Popsicles, juice bars, gelatin, ice cream, sherbet, soup, broth, fruit/vegetable juices, etc

Take Away Points –

- h. ALL residents, even those with cognitive impairments, must be given choices and the opportunity to make decisions.
- i. Choices on: what to eat, when to eat, where to eat, whom to eat with, how leisurely to eat (this includes meals and snacks)
- j. Choices mean –
 - i. Independent Decision Making, Dignity, and Self-Directed Living
 - ii. Individual given control
 - iii. Higher satisfaction/enhanced pleasure with life
 - iv. Improved brain health by exercising the brain and helps improve memory function
 - v. Prevents any harm from not honoring the individual's choice
 - vi. Longer life
- k. We must honor the residents' decisions

Liberalized Diet =

Person-Centered Care

Self-Directed Living

Choices

Dignity

Preferences

Quality of Life

Quality of Care

Increased Food Intake

Improved Health

Weight Maintenance

Increased Lifespan

Satisfaction = #1 Priority

Increased Intake and Liberalized Diet

What can you do as part of the team?

Taking Meal Orders –

Provide All Meal Choices to Resident

Ask for Food Preferences with each Order

Resident's Food Order is Their Decision

Meal Creation -

Create Appealing Meals

Create Flavorful Meals

Provide Variety of Color, Shapes, Consistency & Texture

Foods that Allow for Comfortable Chewing

Familiar Foods

Resident Communication –

What do they like to eat?

Are they satisfied with the quality of food and dining experience?

Hydration & UTIs in the Elderly Population

The elderly population is at an increased risk for dehydration and UTIs.

How does fluid affect a person's health and body?

Fluid status can positively or negatively affect: weight, skin elasticity, capillary refill, urine output, mucous membranes, heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate, eyes, level of consciousness, mental status, appetite, bowel movements

Why is the elderly population at increased risk for UTIs?

Weakened immune system due to age.

Reduced ability to care for self adequately with decreased hygiene and increased bacterial infections.

Decreased fluid intake due to embarrassing bladder control issues.

Less frequent urination and urine in bladder for a longer time, fostering bacteria growth and turning into a UTI.

What can we do to help reduce their risk?

Provide glass of water with each meal at place setting.

Offer water to residents as you take their menu orders.

Fill hydration stations with water.

Encourage resident to drink juice or milk between meals.

Encourage sips of water or other beverage between bites of food.

Encourage family involvement in increasing fluid intake.

Offer water to bed-ridden residents.