

# **PRINCIPLES OF CAREGIVING: FUNDAMENTALS**

## **CHAPTER 8 – NUTRITION AND FOOD PREPARATION**

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**OBJECTIVES**

1. Describe and explain basic concepts of nutrition and hydration.
2. Explain the importance of observing consumer rights in regard to food preferences.
3. Describe basic principles of menu planning and explain how to read food labels.
4. Identify and explain food safety techniques for preparing and storing food.
5. Describe special diets.

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**KEY TERMS**

Calorie	Nutrients
Fluid intake	Portion
Foodborne illness	Serving
Food label	Sodium
Hydration	Thaw law

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## A. BASIC NUTRITION

### 1. Role and Importance of Nutrition

If you have good eating habits and are well nourished, you will have all the nutrients you need for energy and good health. The eating habits of a lifetime can have a great effect on an older person. Many health problems common among older people are related to lifelong diet patterns. These include heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, osteoporosis (thinning bones), atherosclerosis (fatty deposits in blood vessels), and digestive problems. Good nutrition is important in the care of ill and frail persons. **It speeds up healing, recovery from illness, and helps maintain health.**

All peoples have individual preferences for certain foods. They may need a certain diet. Some have food allergies, and others may need more time chewing the food. Be observant. Ask questions, and be respectful of the person's wishes. Special diets will be discussed later in this chapter.

### 2. Essential Nutrients

Nutrients	Food Sources	Body Uses Them For:
Proteins	Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, milk, peas, nuts	Growth and strength, cell repair, builds bones and body tissue
Carbohydrates	Breads, cereals, rice, pasta, potatoes, corn, fruits, sugars, flour	Energy
Fats	Butter, margarine, oil, ice cream, dressings, meats, nuts, mayonnaise	Energy, protection of body organs, nerves, cells
Vitamins	Fruits and vegetables, milk, liver, cereals, breads	Growth, healing, resistance to sickness, healthy skin, eyes, teeth, gums, hair and bones
Minerals	Milk, cheese, yogurt, green leafy vegetables, meat, eggs, breads, cereals	Bones, teeth, blood, nerves, muscles
Water	Water and other liquids	More than half of the human body is made up of water. The body uses water to carry nutrients to the cells, flush wastes from the cells, and help control body temperature
Fiber	Raw fruits and vegetables, whole grain cereals	Digestion, getting rid of wastes

### 3. Hydration

Water is important because it prevents dehydration, reduces stress on the kidneys, and helps maintain regular bowel functions. An adequate amount of daily water intake is by far the most important of all the dietary requirements for the body and is essential to life. A person may live for several weeks without food, but can only survive for a few days without water. That is because our bodies are 55% to 75% water, and we lose about 10 cups of water each day through sweating, going to the bathroom, and breathing.

The amount of water we lose each day increases when the temperature is higher.

Increased fluid intake is required for people who:

- Experience heavy sweating/perspiration.
- Use tranquilizers, seizure medications, or some behavioral health medications.
- Experience heavy drooling.
- Experience urinary tract infections (kidney and bladder).

Signs and symptoms of dehydration:

- Dry skin, especially around mouth/lips and mucous membranes.
- Less skin flexibility/elasticity.
- Dark, concentrated urine with decreased urination.
- Less/absent sweating.
- Leads to electrolyte imbalance, disorientation, even death if untreated.

To encourage an individual to drink fluids:

- Have water within reach, encourage intake.
- Use other fluids as well, such as shakes, fruit drinks, soups, puddings, and gelatins.
- Avoid caffeine and sugar in fluids, if possible, since caffeine and sugar are dehydrating to the body. If you drink a lot of coffee, cola (even diet cola) and other similar liquids, you need to drink more water than the average person.

People who are on diuretics (water pills) often do not like to drink water. They feel it makes them have to go to the bathroom more frequently. However, not drinking enough fluids will send a message to the brain to retain fluids. This makes the condition being treated even worse. Diuretics are often used to treat heart and circulation problems.

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## B. MENU PLANNING

### 1. Consumer Rights

Consumer rights dictate that each person has the choice of which foods to eat and choice of meal times. However, what happens if the person wants to eat something that is not on their prescribed diet?

The DCW should try to come to an agreement with the individual in order to follow the diet. For example, if the person is diabetic and is demanding chocolate cake, maybe the person can have a small piece and freeze the rest. If you cannot resolve differences or if you have any questions, contact your supervisor.

#### General guidelines

- **Note any food allergies.** Some food allergies can cause a severe allergic reaction, which can quickly lead to death.
- **Note any special diet orders.** Plan and prepare the meal according to the dietary restrictions
- Make sure client uses good oral hygiene. Assist with oral care if needed. Poor dental hygiene can lead to inflammation of the gums and sensitive teeth, causing pain and difficulty with chewing. It also can decrease the person's appetite.
- Make sure dental appliances such as dentures and bridges fit and are used properly.

#### Cultural and religious issues

Most people have foods they like and don't like. Some food preferences relate to what the person ate while growing up. Cultural and religious traditions also can influence what foods people prefer to eat or avoid. For example, people of the Muslim faith do not eat pork. In many Asian cultures rice is included with most meals. **It's best to ask and not assume anything about what someone wants to eat.** Typically, the DCW can respond sensibly to preferences, unless whole classes of important foods are ruled out. If you have any questions, talk to your supervisor.

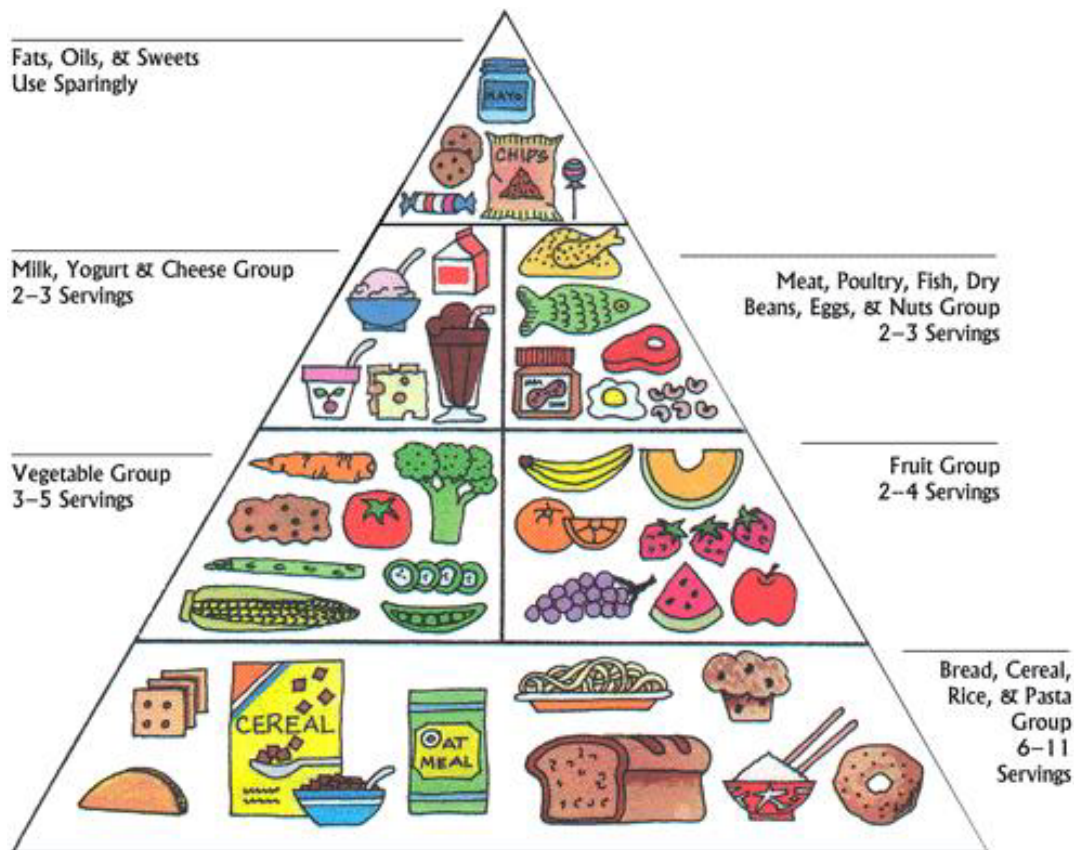
### 2. Food Groups

- **Breads and cereals** are a good source of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Whole grain products such as whole wheat bread, oatmeal, and brown rice are good choices. Look for dry breakfast cereals that are low in sugar.
- **Fruits and vegetables** are good sources of fiber and are generally low in fat. Include dark leafy greens and yellow or orange vegetables in the daily diet as these are rich in vitamins, minerals, and cancer-preventing chemicals. Citrus fruits/juices such as oranges, grapefruits, and tangerines are rich sources of vitamin C.

- **Proteins**, animal (beef, pork, poultry, fish, and eggs) and/or vegetable (beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds), need to be included in the diet daily. Look for lean meats and trim off visible fat.
- **Dairy products** are good sources of calcium and protein. Unless being underweight is a concern, choose fat free milk and low-fat cheese. If milk causes diarrhea or gas, yogurt or cheese may be acceptable, or try enzyme-treated milk (Lactaid).
- **Fats and sweets** should be limited to small amounts.

### The food guide pyramid

- The food guide pyramid is an outline of what to eat each day based on dietary guidelines.
- No one food group is more important than another – you need them all for good nutrition and health.
- Start with plenty of breads, cereals, rice, pasta, vegetables and fruits.
- Add 2 – 3 servings from the milk group and 2 – 3 servings from the meat group.
- Go easy on fats, oils and sweets, and other foods found at the top of the pyramid.



### 3. Food Labels

Most packaged food has a food label. It lists the calories per serving and specific nutrients. An example of a food label is on the next page. Look at the sample labels as you read the following explanations:

- Ingredients are listed from highest to lowest by volume or weight (most to least).
- The number of calories in a serving and the calories from fat are listed.
- Vitamins and minerals are only listed if there is enough in the food to make it significant.
- Percent Daily Values (DV) are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Older people usually need 1600 to 2000 calories based on their activity level (males usually require the higher number of calories)
- Total fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrate and dietary fiber are listed both by weight in grams and percentages of daily value.
- You may also want to compare the labels to see which foods are high in fat, good sources of vitamin C. Are any high in cholesterol? High in fat? Which has the lowest sugar?

The recommendations for the daily intake of total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium are:

- Total fat: less than 65 grams or 30% of caloric intake
- Saturated fat: less than 20 grams
- Cholesterol: less than 300 mg
- Sodium: less than 2,400 mg

These two labels are very similar. The one on the left is for reduced fat milk; the one on the right is for non-fat milk. Study the circled numbers to see the differences.

**Reduced Fat Milk (2%)**

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 cup (236ml)	
Servings Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 120	Calories from Fat 45
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 5g	<b>8%</b>
Saturated Fat 3g	<b>15%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 20mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 120mg	<b>5%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 11g	<b>4%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 11g	
<b>Protein</b> 9g	<b>17%</b>
Vitamin A 10% • Vitamin C 4%	
<b>Calcium 30%</b> • Iron 0% • Vitamin D 25%	
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	

**Nonfat Milk**

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 cup (236ml)	
Servings Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 80	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> Less than 5mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 120mg	<b>5%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 11g	<b>4%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 11g	
<b>Protein</b> 9g	<b>17%</b>
Vitamin A 10% • Vitamin C 4%	
<b>Calcium 30%</b> • Iron 0% • Vitamin D 25%	
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	

**Note: The amount of nutrients and protein per serving stays the same but the calories, fat percentage, and cholesterol are decreased with the Nonfat Milk.**

Adapted from "How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label", U.S. Food and Drug Administration, <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>.

#### 4. Portions and Servings

For many people, a portion is the amount of food they can put on a plate. Over time, people get used to certain portion sizes. Some eat large portions, others eat small portions. With nutrition, it is important to think of portions in a standard size. These are called *servings*. If a meal plan suggests 2 servings of vegetables, then that could be 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables plus ½ cup of other chopped vegetable. Serving sizes are not related to a person’s hunger or appetite. **A serving is a standard amount of food.**

Examples of various food serving sizes are listed below. If you eat a larger portion, count it as more than one serving. For example, eating a whole bagel from a bakery (usually a large bagel) would equal four servings of bread.

Food Group	Common serving sizes
<b>Milk, Yogurt and Cheese</b>	
1 cup of milk or yogurt	1-1/2 ounces of natural cheese
2 ounces of processed cheese	1-1/2 cups of ice cream, ice milk
2 cups cottage cheese	
<b>Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts</b>	
2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish	1/2 cup of cooked dry beans
2 tablespoons of peanut butter	1/3 cup of nuts
2 slices of bologna (1 oz slices)	1 egg
<b>Vegetables</b>	
1 cup of raw leafy vegetables	3/4 cup of vegetable juice
1/2 cup other vegetables, cooked or raw	10 French fries
<b>Fruit</b>	
1 medium apple, banana, orange	3/4 cup of fruit juice
½ cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit	1/4 whole avocado
<b>Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta</b>	
1 slice of bread	1/2 medium doughnut
1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal	4-inch pancake
4 small crackers	1/2 small bagel
1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta	

Here is a handy reference card showing what serving sizes look like.

### SERVING SIZE CARD

<p><b>1 Serving Looks Like . . .</b></p> <p><b>GRAIN PRODUCTS</b></p> <p>1 cup of cereal flakes = fist </p> <p>1 pancake = compact disc </p> <p>½ cup of cooked rice, pasta, or potato = ½ baseball </p> <p>1 slice of bread = cassette tape </p> <p>1 piece of cornbread = bar of soap </p>	<p><b>1 Serving Looks Like . . .</b></p> <p><b>VEGETABLES AND FRUIT</b></p> <p>1 cup of salad greens = baseball </p> <p>1 baked potato = fist </p> <p>1 med. fruit = baseball</p> <p>½ cup of fresh fruit = ½ baseball </p> <p>¼ cup of raisins = large egg </p>
<p><b>1 Serving Looks Like . . .</b></p> <p><b>DAIRY AND CHEESE</b></p> <p>1½ oz. cheese – 4 stacked dice or 2 cheese slices </p> <p>½ cup of ice cream = ½ baseball </p> <p><b>FATS</b></p> <p>1 tsp. margarine or spreads = 1 dice </p>	<p><b>1 Serving Looks Like . . .</b></p> <p><b>MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES</b></p> <p>3 oz. meat, fish, and poultry = deck of cards </p> <p>3 oz. grilled/baked fish = checkbook </p> <p>2 Tbsp. peanut butter = ping pong ball </p>

Adapted from the National Institute of Health: National Heart, Lungs and Blood Institute  
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/eat-right/distortion.htm>



## 5. Food Label and Portion Activity

*Divide into small groups. Each group will be given a food label. Read the label and answer the following questions. Be prepared to share information from the food label with the class.*

Name of Food: \_\_\_\_\_

a. How many servings does your package contain?

How many calories per serving?

When eating this food, do you think a person normally eats more or less than the serving size?

b. What is the main ingredient of your food?

How do you know?

c. Would you serve this food to someone who is trying to:

- Reduce his or her cholesterol? Why or why not?
- Increase fiber? Why or why not?
- Limit salt (sodium)? Why or why not?

d. What food group or groups does this food belong to on the Food Guide Pyramid?

e. Is this food a good source of any vitamins and minerals? If yes, list them:

Used with permission from: California Department of Developmental Services-Direct Care Worker Training.
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**Did you know?**

- |  |      |       |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. Good nutrition is important for good health .....       | True | False |
| 2. Meat and milk products are good sources of fiber .....  | True | False |
| 3. A portion is the same as a serving .....                | True | False |
| 4. The food label shows how much salt is in the food ..... | True | False |
| 5. Water is an important part of nutrition.....            | True | False |

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**C. FOOD SAFETY**

**1. Foodborne Illness**

Foodborne illness is transmitted to people by food or beverages, sometimes called *food poisoning*. The very young and the very old are at increased risk for foodborne illnesses for different reasons:

- The immune system is not as efficient.
- Stomach acid decreases with aging.
- Underlying conditions such as diabetes, cancer treatments, kidney disease, HIV/AIDS, and a history of an organ transplant increase the risk for illness.

To reduce the risk of illness from bacteria in food, individuals who are at greatest risk are advised not to eat:

- Raw fin fish and shellfish, including oysters, clams, mussels, and scallops.
- Raw or unpasteurized milk or cheese, and soft cheese (Brie, Camembert).
- Raw or lightly cooked egg or egg products including salad dressings, cookie or cake batter, sauces, and beverages such as eggnog. Foods made from commercially pasteurized eggs are safe to eat.
- Raw meat or poultry.
- Raw sprouts (alfalfa, clover, and radish).
- Unpasteurized or untreated fruit or vegetable juice (these juices will carry a warning).



**Recognizing foodborne illness**

- The bacteria in unsafe food are hard to detect. Often the individual cannot see, smell or taste the bacteria.
- Foodborne bacteria may take 20 minutes to six weeks to make you ill depending on the type of bacteria.
- Symptoms of foodborne illness may be confused with other types of illness, but are usually nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or a fever, headache and body aches.

## 2. Food Preparation

### **Washing your hands**

Washing your hands following correct procedures before preparing food is very important. A DCW may see several clients and/or do different tasks such as cleaning, bathing and food preparation. When preparing food for a client, the DCW needs to clean fingernails (fake nails) and contain hair (pull back or wear a hairnet). Wear disposable gloves to reduce contamination and cover broken skin areas (cover with a bandage first). Remember to wash your hands before applying and after removing gloves. Refer to the handwashing skill in Chapter 7, Infection Control.

### **Sanitizing surfaces, dishes and equipment**

- Use only clean utensils for tasting food.
- Thoroughly sanitize all dishes, utensils and work surfaces with a bleach solution (1:10, 1 part bleach, 10 parts water) after each use.
- Use bleach solution (1:10) to clean cutting boards, knives, counter tops, sink, meat grinders, blenders and can openers.
- To sanitize dishes and utensils water must be **at least 170°F**, or add bleach to the wash water.
- If a dishwasher is used, do not open the door to stop the dry cycle. The dry cycle is an effective sanitizer.
- Sponges used to clean the kitchen where food is prepared should NOT be used to clean up bathroom-type spills. Dirty looking sponges should not be used to wash dishes or clean food preparation areas.
- Sponges can be disinfected by soaking in a bleach solution (1:10) for five minutes (any longer and the sponges may disintegrate).
- Clean the inside of the refrigerator with soap and water to control molds.

### **Washing and preparing food**

#### ***Preparing vegetables***

Prepackaged salads and other vegetables that are not cooked before eating are considered a current leading source of foodborne illness in the U.S. Do not serve salad greens or raw vegetables unless you have washed them. It is also acceptable to soak them in a weak bleach solution as follows:

- Fill a sink halfway with cool water. Add 2 ounces (4 tablespoons or 1/4 cup) of chlorine bleach. Soak produce for no more than 5 minutes. Rinse the produce in plain cool water, drain, pat dry and store. This also makes the produce last longer in the refrigerator.

#### ***Other guidelines***

- Fresh vegetables should be eaten soon after being purchased.
- Some veggies such as potatoes need scrubbing to remove the dirt. It is better not to peel such vegetables, because nutritional value will be lost.

- Avoid boiling vegetables because nutrients will end up in the water. Instead you can microwave, steam, or stir-fry vegetables in water or a little bit of oil.
- Frying vegetables (or any other items) can improve taste, but excess oil adds calories.
- If possible, have two cutting boards; one for raw meat, poultry and fish, and the other for vegetable and cooked foods. A hard nonporous (acrylic) cutting board is better than a wooden one for preventing the spread of bacteria. Thoroughly wash boards with soap and water and then rinse with diluted bleach solution.

### **Defrosting meat**

There are three safe methods to thaw frozen meat (the *Thaw Law*):

- Leave it in the refrigerator.
- Place the frozen food in a watertight plastic bag under cold water and change the water often.
- Microwave the meat. Follow the manufacturer’s directions.

**Caution:** It is NOT a safe practice to thaw meat, poultry or fish on the kitchen counter. Bacteria can multiply rapidly at room temperature.

### **3. Storage**

- **Meat** — Store fresh or thawed raw meat, poultry and fish in the refrigerator. Store cooked meat or poultry products in the freezer if you want to keep them longer than a few days.
- **Canned foods** – If a commercially canned food shows any sign of spoilage—bulging can, leakage, spurting liquid, off odor or mold—throw it out. DO NOT TASTE IT.

### **Two-hour rule**

Discard (throw away) any perishable foods left at room temperature longer than 2 hours. When temperatures are above 90°F, discard food after 1 hour!

#### **Did You Know?**

At room temperature, bacteria in food can double every 20 minutes!

**Store leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer immediately after the meal.**

**Caution:** Do not rely on reheating to make leftovers safe. Staph bacteria produce a toxin that is not destroyed by heating.




**Refrigerated leftovers need to be tossed  
after 3 days.**

**Refrigerator and freezer temperatures**

- Refrigerator temperatures should be kept between 40 degrees and 32 degrees.
- Freezer temperatures should be kept at 0 degrees or less.
- Check temperatures with a thermometer. Don't rely on the refrigerator dials.

**Open containers**

- Avoid storing foods in cabinets that are under sinks, drains or water pipes.
- Wash the tops of cans and jars with soap and water before opening.
- All open containers should be stored in a dated, closable container within four hours of opening, stored a minimum of four inches off the floor.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Keep food clean</li><li>2. Keep hot food hot</li><li>3. Keep cold food cold</li><li>4. <b>When in doubt, throw it out!</b></li></ol>
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**D. SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS AND DIETS**

**1. General Guidelines**

**READ LABELS.** Most special diets require that certain foods or nutrients are limited or avoided. The DCW will have to read labels to make sure the food does not contain ingredients that are not allowed, or more than the allowed amounts.

**Use fresh foods.** Fresh foods have more flavor, color and texture than canned or frozen foods. Additionally, processed, packaged foods often have extra salt, sugar, and/or fat, and may have decreased amounts of vitamins and minerals.

In general, a well-balanced meal, such as the heart healthy diet, can be served to all persons including those on diabetic, low-salt, low-fat or other similar special diets.

## 2. Low-fat/Low-sodium (salt) – A Heart Healthy Diet

### Every day you should have:

- 8 to 10 percent of total calories from saturated fat.
- 30 percent or less of total calories from fat.
- Less than 300 milligrams (mg) of dietary cholesterol.
- No more than 2400 milligrams (mg) of sodium.



### To reduce salt in your diet:

- Choose low or reduced-sodium, or no-salt-added versions of foods and condiments when available.
- Choose fresh, frozen, or canned (low-sodium or no-salt-added) vegetables.
- Use fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat, rather than canned or processed types.
- Use spices instead of salt. In cooking and at the table, flavor foods with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt-free seasoning blends.

## 3. Diabetic Diet

There have been many changes recently in diabetic diets. Current diabetic management includes counting carbohydrates. Concentrated sugars can be eaten as long as the portion size and frequency are limited. Specific dietary guidelines should be obtained from the client's physician. Ask your supervisor if dietary guidelines are available for the client.

## 4. Modified Diet

You can change the texture, or puree foods to accommodate an individual's difficulty with chewing or swallowing. Try putting regular food into a blender/food processor instead of using baby food. This way the client can eat what the rest of the family is eating, only the consistency has been changed. Sometimes it helps just to cut the food into very small bite-sized pieces.

### For individuals who have had a stroke:

- Sometimes a thickener is added to liquids to reduce choking on liquids.
- Encourage chewing on the unaffected side of his/her mouth.

## 5. Other Diets

Following are some of the special diets a DCW might need to know. Get information from your supervisor or ask the client/family about specific guidelines.

**High fiber:** To improve digestion, elimination and overall health. Fiber is the part of a plant that cannot be digested. Fiber is found in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and dried beans. The recommended amount is 25 to 35 grams of fiber a day.

**Renal:** For people with reduced kidney function. Generally the person needs to limit foods high in protein, salt and potassium. These foods include meats, whole grains, milk and cheese. Salt substitutes are used with caution since they are generally high in potassium. Clients on dialysis will also have to limit their fluid intake.

**Gluten-free:** For people who have celiac disease, an intestinal disorder, or a wheat allergy. The person is not able to have any food with wheat, barley or rye in it. They may be able to have rice, corn or potatoes. Note: Some foods use wheat as a thickener. Read the list of ingredients on the labels to avoid the ingredients that are not allowed.

**Lactose intolerant:** For people who have difficulty digesting lactose, a sugar found in milk and milk products. As people age, lactose intolerance may increase. Symptoms can include stomach pain, gas, nausea, and diarrhea. People can avoid milk and milk products, but they should increase their dietary intake of foods high in calcium such as fish with soft bones (salmon and sardines) and dark green vegetables such as spinach. There are also lactose-reduced milk products and pills to take with regular milk. Processed cheese and yogurt are usually well tolerated.

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**Did you know?**

- |   |      |       |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. You should not keep any meat leftovers .....                             | True | False |
| 2. Hot food should be cooled completely before it's put in the fridge ..... | True | False |
| 3. Bagged vegetables need to be washed .....                                | True | False |
| 4. For people on a special diet, personal choice must be disregarded .....  | True | False |



**How Important is Good Nutrition and Following Your Diet?**

*During 10 years of observing different dialysis units, there was one thing that seemed to matter the most and that was how people that were diabetic felt if they followed their prescribed diets. Unfortunately, kidney dialysis treatment units were the last place they wanted to be. Most people I spoke with, and I can tell you it was in the hundreds, wished they had just followed their diet. Some were there just on dialysis, some had become blind, some lost toes and some even legs from the complications of diabetes. How sad, I thought, when in many cases all a person had to do is stay on a diet and their meds. I saw some diabetics who were just on dialysis but were so tired and sick they had to go to the hospital more often, because they still were not following their diet.*

*Yes, I love my chocolate as much as the next person, but is it worth this type of lifestyle?*

*I know an attendant who was diabetic and she was one of those diabetics that took her diagnosis seriously. Good nutrition was very important to her. When she was given a position with a client who was also diabetic and insulin dependent she talked to the family about her diabetes. The family was 100% supportive in having the attendant cook a healthy diabetic meal plan for the client. Did this make a change? Well, it sure did. Today, the client's diabetes is controlled by just diet and exercise alone without any medications! Can an attendant and good nutrition make a difference? This attendant sure did!*

*Cathie Martin, caregiver supervisor*



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## **E. MENU AND SHOPPING TIPS**

Weekly meal planning saves time for the DCW and saves money for the client. There is not as much impulse buying. Planning menus with the client and the family gives the client control over food preferences and fosters independence.

- Organize the list into groups found in the same area of the store, such as meat, dairy, etc.
- Check prices in the newspaper and clip coupons. Read labels and compare store brands.
- Do not buy large quantities if they cannot be stored, handled or used before expiration date.
- Do not shop sale items if you don't normally use the item and cannot store it. **A bargain you can't use is no bargain.**
- Buy easy-to-prepare foods for times when you are not there to cook. Note special diets.
- Consider buying smaller portions in the deli instead of preparing large quantities and throwing it away.

- Consider freezing bread and cheese and take out only the amount that is needed.
- Eggs have the same nutritional content whether they are jumbo or small, brown or white.
- Cheaper cuts of meat have the same nutritional content—ground beef, for example.
- When buying poultry compare prices on parts or whole chicken.
- Consider how much freezer space the individual has and buy larger quantities to freeze. Wrap pieces or portions individually in freezer wrap before freezing. Be sure to label and date items.
- Make sure meats and fish are fresh. Look at the color and smell the item.
- Do not buy damaged canned items.
- Purchase perishable foods last. Don't let ice cream melt while shopping.



## **F. MENU PLANNING ACTIVITY**

Shopping and meal preparation is an important part of the DCW's job. Healthy nutrition and adequate hydration can be as beneficial as the right medication in maintaining proper health. A proper diet can speed up healing, recovery from illness, increase blood supply and help maintain one's health. A basic knowledge of restrictive diets, as well as how to read a food label and how to shop and plan meals using the food pyramid are necessary skills for the DCW.

Planning and preparing meals while considering the client's limited finances, cultural preferences and decreasing appetite can be a challenge, but one that must be addressed each and every day. Allowing family members and the client to have input in food selection make for a positive meal experience.

### **Practical Tips**

- When planning and preparing meals, ask the client what he or she would like.
- Don't forget to include a variety of fluids when planning menus.
- Remember fresh over frozen over processed.
- Be aware of the dietary restrictions when planning meals.
- Serving sizes are generally smaller than what people eat (1/2 sandwich, 1/2 cup vegetables, 4 crackers).
- Remind the client to wear dentures if he/she has them.

- Meal time is a social time, sit and visit with client if they like. Make meal time pleasant.
- Request recipes from client or family so that you can prepare favorite meals.

**Common Mistakes**

- Preparing meals without asking the client what he/she prefers.
- Preparing large portions is wasteful, costly and unhealthy.
- Preparing processed foods and soups, which are high in fat and sodium.
- Forgetting fluids as essential parts of meals and snacks.

**Practice Scenario**

Mr. Wilson is 76 years old and lives with his wife in a small apartment. Mr. Wilson has mid stage dementia and is unable to provide for his own care. Mrs. Wilson is very active in his care and likes to be involved in the decisions of the household. Both Mr. and Mrs. Wilson are very health conscious and prefer fresh fruits, vegetables and limited high fat meats. They always eat a late breakfast and a lighter dinner, with the largest meal being lunch mid day. Mr. Wilson's doctor has expressed that he would like to see Mr. Wilson put on a few more pounds. The doctor has also suggested that he watch his sodium content to help in keeping his blood pressure manageable.

Plan lunch, dinner and an evening snack for the Wilsons.