

Module 14 – Nutrition

Introduction

Good nutrition is vital in the overall health of the individual. The home care aide is vital in assisting the individual to shop, prepare and assist with meals. This module will explore the essentials of good nutrition and the responsibility of the home care aide in proper nutrition and hydration of the home care patient.

Objectives

At the end of the module, the nurse aide will be able to:

1. Discuss Dietary Guidelines for Americans
2. Identify positive and negative food safety practices
3. Shop and prepare healthy meals for patients
4. Recognize the importance of hydration
5. Explain how to avoid dehydration in patients

Instructional Resource Materials

- Power Point for Module #14 – Nutrition
- Handout/Activities
- Instructor to print one copy of the guidelines for use to review with students. The pdf version can be accessed via internet [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)
[Dietary Guidelines for Americans | Food and Nutrition Service](#)
- Bring in several grocery store flyers for the weekly sales; ask students to bring any they are willing to share
- Invite a culinary department guest speaker
- Prior to this class, assign each student a special diet (e.g. low sodium, diabetic). Have students prepare a food item from that diet and bring to class. Have students share/discuss what they learned from preparing that food.
- Other suggestion – if your institution allows, allow students to work in groups to prepare a sample meal
- Other suggestion – field trip to the grocery store for label reading and mock grocery shopping for patient on special diet

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Slides	Instructor's Script	Notes
Slide 1 Title Slide	Script Module 14 – Nutrition	
Slide 2	Script Objectives - At the end of the module, the nurse aide will be able to: - Discuss 2025 – 2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans - Identify positive and negative food safety practices - Shop and prepare healthy meals for patients - Recognize the importance of hydration - Explain how to avoid dehydration in patients	
Slide 3	Script - For the human body to continue to grow normal cells, maintain normal functioning of all systems, and have energy for activities, a well-balanced diet is needed. - However, it is important to remember: - Each person is unique. Each patient is different and cannot be compared to other patients of the same age or condition. - Nutritional status is based on a patient's body composition, functional status, and the presence of illness or disease and is unique to each patient	
Slide 4	Script - It is important for the home care aide to recognize that there could be physiological and/or psychological factors which may affect a patient's nutritional practices. - Physiological: - Decreased saliva production - Loose dentures, gum disease or other dental problems - Prolonged digestion - Increase in indigestion - Constipation - Decreased appetite - Decreased taste - Difficulty swallowing - Decreased smell - Psychological: - Depression - Loss of interest in eating - No longer receives joy in eating or from food - Forgetfulness	
Slide 5	Script Module 14-A Dietary Guidelines for Americans	

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	• Every five years the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) are updated by the US Department of Agriculture and Health and Human Services for use by federal nutrition program operators, policy makers, and healthcare providers. Nutrition science experts in the past have summarized the current state of nutrition science without influence from food industries or the government. • In 1992, the original food guide pyramid was used as a visual guide for the Dietary Guidelines for America (DGA). The two concepts focus was a pyramid with the base representing the largest amount of food Americans should eat. As the pyramid narrowed the recommendation showed a decrease in food consumption. The pyramid failed to identify which foods were healthy in each section. • In 2011, MyPlate was introduced for the DGA. This image was a circular plate identifying what people would normally consume for each of the food groups. • The 2025 – 2030 guidelines show an image of an inverted food pyramid. The image encourages Americans to consume real food over highly processed and packaged food. The guidelines prioritize protein and dairy, choose healthy fat and reduce sugar. The inverted pyramid is a visual of what an individual should consume in a single day. The larger sections represent the food groups that should comprise the majority of an individual's daily diet. As the sections decrease, the indication is for portion sizes to be progressively smaller.	
Slide 6	Script 2025 – 2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Key updates include the following: • Protein: Emphasis is animal protein over plant based. • Dairy: Emphasis is now on full-fat dairy for adults • Fruits and vegetables: The recommendation is an increase of half-cup in vegetables. • Grains: Emphasis changed toward whole grains and away from refined/highly processed grains. One difference from the original pyramid and MyPlate is the inverted pyramid does not convey individual portion size. In summary, the biggest changes are the higher amount of animal-derived proteins and full-fat dairy.	
Slide 7	Script	

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	Review instructor's copy Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030	
Slide 8	Script - From the different food categories, the goal is to receive a daily supply of 6 basic nutrients: - Protein - Carbohydrates - Fats - Vitamins - Minerals - Water (to be discussed later in the hydration section of this module)	
Slide 9	Script - Protein is essential for tissue growth and repair. It is important for patients with skin breakdown to have a lot of protein in their diets. - Protein helps to form antibodies that defend the body against disease. Protein also serves as another form of energy for the body. - Reliable sources of protein include fish, poultry, meat, eggs, milk, cheese, nuts, and dried beans.	
Slide 10	Script - Carbohydrates supply the body with fuel to meet the body's energy needs. Carbohydrates also provide fiber which aids in digestion. - Carbohydrates are broken down into two categories: complex carbohydrates and simple carbohydrates. During digestion, carbohydrates are broken down into sugars which are absorbed into the blood.	
Slide 11	Script - Fat helps the body store energy. It also helps to provide the body with insulation and helps to protect the organs. Fat also helps the body to maintain a healthy nervous system. - Examples of fat are animal fats found in meat, butter, oil, etc.	
Slide 12	Script - Vitamins cannot be produced by the body and can only be obtained in food. Important vitamins to get each day are: - Vitamin A - Vitamin C - Vitamin B2 - Vitamin B3	

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	○ Vitamin D ○ Thiamin	
Slide 13	Script • Minerals assist with various chemical reactions in the body. Examples of minerals include: ○ Iron ○ Sodium ○ Potassium ○ Calcium ○ Phosphorus	
Slide 14	Script • Water is the most essential nutrient for life. • Water is covered in detail under Hydration	
Slide 15	Script • Module 14-B – Special Diets & Reading Food Labels	
Slide 16	Script • Doctors will often recommend that a patient follow a special diet. A special diet might be recommended for several reasons – a nutritional deficiency, postoperative care, disease management, weight control, or to decrease certain substances in the diet that may be harmful to a patient's health.	
Slide 17	Script • Handout #2 – Special Diets • Instructor – review handout with students to cover special diets.	
Slide 18	Script • Read all the labels on a food package before purchasing. Labels often have information regarding expiration or use-by date of the product, proper handling/cooking, and nutritional information. Food allergy information will be printed on the package for those who have food allergies. It is important that you be aware of any food allergies a patient may have. • When assisting patients with food selection, try to help them make healthy choices. Specifically, look closely at saturated fat content, sodium content, and expiration dates. • Distribute The Nutrition Facts Label - An Overview and discuss with the class. See pdf file.	PDF documents are separate files

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Slide 19	Script • Handout #3 – High Sodium Foods • There is a wide variety of foods that contain substantial amounts of sodium. Many home care patients will have sodium restrictions; therefore, this list would be helpful to serve as a reminder. • Possible Activity: Invite a culinary guest speaker to your classroom to discuss special diets and tips to prepare those kinds of meals. Or instead, you could take your class to the culinary department and learn how to prepare a special diet meal. This is also a terrific way to learn food safety and preparation.	
Slide 20	Script • Module 14-C – Food Safety & Meal Preparation	
Slide 21	Script • Making healthy food choices does not stop at buying healthy food. Safely handling and preparing food is just as important. Here are some examples: ○ Always wash fruits and vegetables before consuming. Even if the food has a peel on it, you will be handling the peeling and could therefore transmit potential pathogens onto the food under the peel. Wash the outside peeling before you begin to prepare that food. ○ Keep surfaces in the kitchen clean. ○ Wash your hands. ○ Clean lids of canned goods before opening. ○ Separate raw foods from other foods. Cross-contamination could occur. Use separate cutting boards and/or utensils when cooking with meat and other foods. ○ Always cook food thoroughly. Do not trust your eyes – you cannot tell what the inside of your food looks like. Use a food thermometer to measure internal temperature of the food. ○ Always label any packages that you may open but not use in its entirety so that others can see what date the food was opened. ○ Always be mindful of expiration dates. You may want to help your patient check foods on a regular basis to make sure no food has expired. Consuming expired food can be dangerous to a patient's health. ○ See Handout #4 – Food Temperature for proper cooking temperatures. ○ Refrigerate food promptly – preferably within 1 hour. ○ See Handout #5 – Cold Storage Chart for guidelines on storing food in the refrigerator vs. the freezer.	
Slide 22	Script	

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	• When preparing meals for a patient, the home care aide must be aware of potential dietary restrictions, food allergies, and of course patient preferences. If there is a special diet recommended, the nurse will inform the home care aide of those restrictions. It is not the role of the home care aide to suggest dietary changes or limitations to the patient. • Of importance to consider are the patient's regional, cultural, and/or religious food preferences/ restrictions. The place or culture we grew up in influences the kinds of foods we like to eat. • Certain religious practices influence diet. For example, some Jewish people will need to eat kosher foods. • Ethnic and religious groups often have certain foods that are common to them and may be eaten at certain times of the year. • Always ask your patient about preferences and be respectful of food choices based on these factors.	
Slide 23	Script • As the home care aide, you might be expected to assist the patient with his/her nutritional needs. • While it is the role of the nurse or supervisor to determine what recommendations to follow, the home care aide can offer support to the patient in other ways. For example: ○ Offer small, frequent meals. ○ If the patient will not eat a lot, offer foods that are high calorie, high protein and nutrient dense (contains lots of nutrients). ○ Food should be pleasurable to look at and eat. ○ Offer fluids throughout the day – leave fluids within reach of the patient unless they have a fluid restriction. Always check with your supervisor to make sure that your patient does not have any dietary or fluid restrictions. ○ If patients are nauseated, colder foods may be tolerated easier than hot. ○ If your patient has had a stroke, it may be difficult for them to swallow liquids. You may have to thicken their liquids before consumption. You will need special instruction from your supervisor as to the amount of thickener needed. There are various degrees of thickener.	
Slide 24	Script • Always consider your patients' quality of life regarding food choices. • Offer more choices and try to appeal to your patients taste.	

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	• If your patient has diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc., do not overreact if they cheat on their diet. They have the right to make occasional poor choices. • Do not preach – do not use guilt to try to control patients.	
Slide 25	Script • Activity #1 – Food Safety • Additional Activity: If a member of the culinary team was not able to come and present regarding the special diet, a speaker may be willing to talk to the class about safe food handling and the practices they employ.	
Slide 26	Script • Module 14-D – Grocery Shopping	
Slide 27	Script • If you shop for your patient, buy a variety of foods that are nutrient rich. Avoid canned foods that are high in sodium, such as clam chowder. • Your grocery list should include fruits, vegetables, grains, milk and milk products, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dry beans, and nuts. Your patient may also have fats, oils, and sweets in moderation. • There may be times when you are assigned to care for a patient who has an inadequate food supply. In this case, talk with your supervisor – there are many community resources which may be able to assist, such as Meals on Wheels or local food pantries. • It is important that you know your agency's policy for handling cash money, credit cards, or debit cards. Suggestion: Go to https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/healthy-eating-budget/shop-smart and review smart shopping tips from MyPlate.gov.	
Slide 28	Script • Classroom Activity – bring in flyers from grocery store ads, as well as coupons from the Sunday paper. Break the students up into small groups. Give students a budget of \$75 to last for two weeks of food and have them shop for their patient. Each student should make a list and plan for meals. • Was it easy? Hard? Discuss any challenges as a group. Share any tips that the students must save money on a budget.	
Slide 29	Script • Handout #6 – Becoming a Better Shopper • Discuss this handout regarding good shopping practices.	

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Slide 30	Script MODULE 14-E – Hydration	
Slide 31	Script - Water is the most essential nutrient for life. - Water aids in digestion and absorption of food as well as helping to eliminate waste. - Water also helps to maintain normal body temperature. - Minimum daily requirements for water vary with age; however, most adults need about 6 to 8 glasses of water per day. Infants and young children need more water than adults do. - Maintaining fluid balance is essential for good health.	
Slide 32	Script - A lot of home care patients will be at risk of dehydration. - Infants and young children are not able to tolerate fluid loss as well as an adult, which could lead to death. - Older people drink less because they are less thirsty and their receptors that monitor fluid intake are less responsive than they were when they were younger. - Older people or the disabled tend to drink less because of the fear of incontinence. - It is important the aide monitor for adequate fluid intake. Dehydration can lead to constipation, dry skin, dizziness, and weakness. It can become a serious medical condition and would warrant medical care.	
Slide 33	Script Handout #7 – Dehydration - Review the handout with the class.	
Slide 34	Script - A doctor may alter a patient's water intake for medical reasons. In many cases, these orders are given in an inpatient setting. Forcing fluids means the patient should drink increased amounts of fluid. Restricting fluids is when fluid is given to the patient in smaller amounts. Nothing by mouth (NPO) means the patient is not to eat or drink anything. This is typically ordered the night before surgery, lab tests, some x-rays, or due to certain illnesses. - You must receive specific, written instruction if you are assigned to force, restrict or place someone NPO.	

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Slide 35	Script • The importance of nutrition, health, and hydration cannot be overemphasized. And while it is important to encourage our patients to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, we must follow our own advice and do the same if we are to live up to our potential each day!	
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