Why is Elderly Nutritional Needs Different from Young Adults

– Calorie needs change due to more body fat and less lean muscle.
– The challenge for the elderly is to meet the same nutrient needs as when they were younger, yet consume fewer calories.
– Need to choose foods high in nutrients
Nutritionally-Dense Foods

• Many seniors aren’t eating as much as they should, so the food they do eat must be as nutritious as possible.
• Pick whole unprocessed foods that are high in calories and nutrients for their size.
• Healthy fats, whole grains, fresh fruits, vegetables, protein-rich beans, legumes, meat, and dairy products.
http://www.mypyramid.gov/STEPS/nutrientdensefoodchoices.pdf
• The absorption of nutrients tends to be lower in older adults because of age-related changes in the digestive tract
• Their liver may be less effective at breaking down toxic substances
• Some older adults have difficulty digesting fatty goods
• Foods high in dietary fiber and adequate liquids are key in preventing constipation
Vitamins and Minerals

The elderly often lack Vitamin B12, calcium, zinc, Vitamin E, and Folate
How You Can Tell???

• Vitamin B12- Anemia, fatigue, nervous system damage, or sore tongue
• Calcium- bone mineral loss and urinary stones
• Vitamin E- Red Blood cell breakage and anemia, weakness, neurological problems, or muscle cramps
• Folate- Anemia, weakness, fatigue, irritability, shortness of breath, or swollen tongue
• Zinc- loss of appetite, impaired taste acuity, skin rash, impaired immune function, or poor wound healing
Use Supplements Carefully

- Sometimes toxicity can occur with vitamin supplements.
- Elderly people have livers that are less effective than younger adults.
- Elderly do not process Vitamin A as quickly as younger people.
- Certain vitamins can also interact with medications.
Effects of Toxicity

- Vitamin B-12 - None reported
- Calcium - Kidney stones, inhibition of mineral absorption, and constipation
- Vitamin E - cause bleeding or formations of blood clots
- Folate - Masking of Vitamin B-12 deficiency
- Zinc - Vomiting, impaired immune function, decline in blood HDL levels, and impaired copper absorption
Water

• Don’t always know when they are thirsty because the ability to detect thirst declines
• Need to drink plenty of liquids like water, juice, milk, and soup
• 8 glasses of water a day
Class Activity 1

First Part

• Get into groups of 2
• One person will be the grandparent and the other the grandchild
• Compare and contrast MyPyramid sheets based on age being the only difference
• Record what you had for breakfast yesterday on the second sheet

Second Part

• Eat Breakfast
• Write down calories you took in from Breakfast
• Is this within your range of calories for the day and what food groups did you eat from?
Reasons and Solutions for Poor Nutrition in Elderly Population
Appetites decrease
The senses of smell and taste decrease with directly effects the person’s ability to enjoy food.
If a meal isn’t appealing, a senior is less likely to eat as much as they should.
Make food Appealing
Use herbs, marinades, dressings, and sauces to intensify flavors
Switch between a variety of foods during one meal
Try combining textures such as yogurt with granola, to make foods seem more appetizing.
Medication Side Effects

- Cause food to taste differently
- Not meet the caloric intake needs
- Certain medications can reduce appetite
Medication Side Effects

Boost and Ensure can help

Drinking is easier than eating
Poor Dental Health

- Dentures not fitting right
- Jaw pain
- Mouth sores
- Missing teeth
- All can make chewing painful
- Hard to eat healthy foods
Poor Dental Health

- Attend regular dentist appointments
- Make sure dentures fit properly
- Seek medical care for cavities and jaw pain
- Eat canned fruit and vegetables
- Finely sliced food
Financial Trouble

- Fixed or limited incomes
- Cut back on grocery expenses
- Buy cheaper and less nutritious food
- Result in a host of nutrition problems.
Consider government assistance

Home-delivered meals, adult daycare, nutrition education, door-to-door transportation, and financial assistance programs are available to people over the age of 60 who need help.

For more information, visit the U.S. Administration on Aging website at www.AOA.gov.
Transportation Issues

- No car to make it to the grocery store
- Grocery stores being far away
- Lack of driving skills
- Weather obstacles
Transportation Issues

- Take your loved one to the grocery store
- Hire a helper or neighbor to take them to the store
- Have local grocers deliver food to home
- Order online grocery website
Debilitating conditions

Physical pain and poor strength can make preparing a meal very challenging.

Peeling standing long enough to cook a meal
Physical Difficulty

Buy adaptive utensils, cups, and plates
Dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, and poor memory can hurt a senior's ability to eat a variety of foods

- Don’t eat on a regular schedule
- Forgetting what to buy at the store
- Eating the same foods over and over without noticing
- Skipping meals
Forgetfulness

Schedule meals at the same time each day
Give visual and verbal reminders about when it's time to eat.
Decrease in one's appetite
Make one feel apathetic about caring for their health.
Left untreated it can lead to many other nutrition and health problems.
Make eating a social event
Make meals a family occasion
Bring a meal over to their home
Invite them to your house on a regular basis
The elderly become more interested in food when other people are around.
Eating Alone

- Skipping Meals
- Not eating a variety of foods
Eat by a window
Eat a lunch in the park.
Invite a friend to a potluck dinner.
Prepare a new recipe each week and invite friends over for a tasting party.
Use frozen prepared dinners for added variety and convenience.
Add a special touch to your table.
Class Activity 2

- Find a new partner
- Draw from the bowl a piece of paper that has a reason why elderly people stop or have trouble eating
- Create a short scene that includes a grandchild helping their grandparent eat better
- Use the solutions from the PowerPoint and your own
- Be creative
- Perform in front of class