

# Nutrition for the Elderly



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# 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 Digestive System

- 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



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPUCnchOdeM>



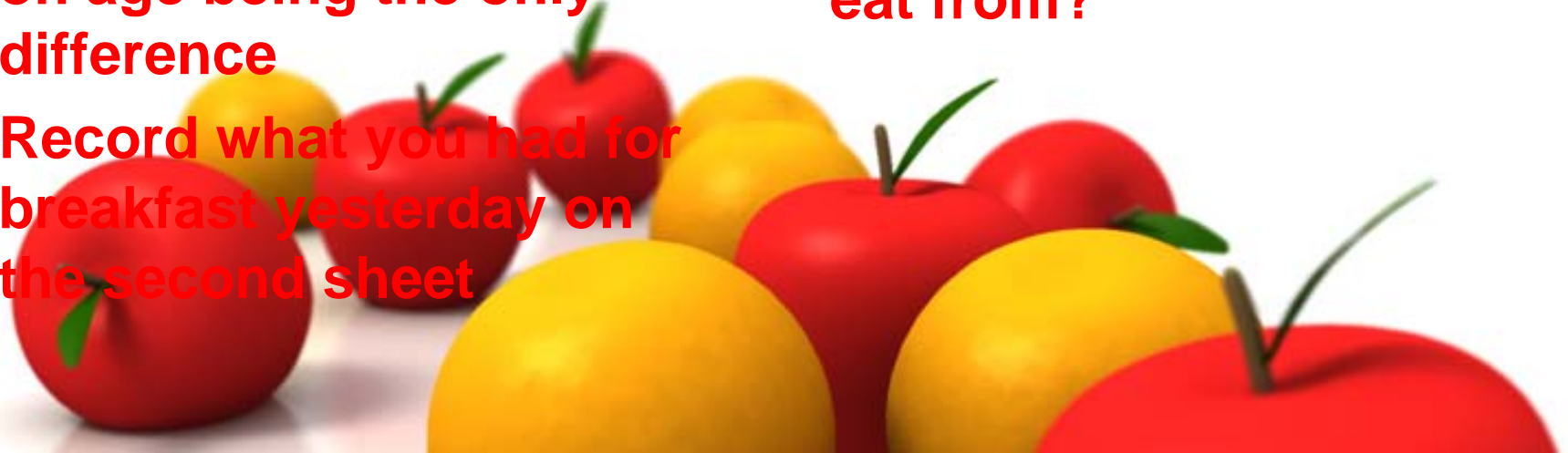
# Class Activity 1

## 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





# Decrease in Senses

- 🍏 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.



# Decrease in Senses

- 🍊 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.



# Financial Trouble

## 🍊 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](http://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



# Physical Difficulty

- 🍏 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







# Forgetfulness

- 🍎 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.



# Depression

- 🍏 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.



# Depression

- 🍊 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



# Eating Alone

- 🍊 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





<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6dqnXbXixY>



# 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

