

Chapter 20

Assisting With Nutrition and Fluids

Basics of Nutrition

- Food and water:
 - Are physical needs
 - Are necessary for life
- A poor diet and poor eating habits:
 - Increase the risk for diseases and infection
 - Cause healing problems
 - Affect physical and mental function
 - This increases the risk for accidents and injuries.

Basic Nutrition

- Nutrition is the processes involved in the ingestion, digestion, absorption, and use of foods and fluids by the body.
 - Good nutrition is needed for growth, healing, and body functions.
- A nutrient is a substance that is ingested, digested, absorbed, and used by the body.
 - Nutrients are grouped into fats, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and water.

MyPlate

- The MyPlate food guidance system encourages smart and healthy food choices and daily activity.
 - The kind and amounts of food to eat daily
 - Gradual improvement
 - Physical activity
 - Variety
 - Moderation
 - The right amount from each food group band
 - Grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, meat and beans, and oils

Nutrients

- Protein is the most important nutrient.
 - It is needed for tissue growth and repair.
- Carbohydrates provide energy and fiber for bowel elimination.
- Fats provide energy.
 - They add flavor to food and help the body use certain vitamins.
- Vitamins are needed for certain body functions.
- Minerals are needed for bone and tooth formation, nerve and muscle function, fluid balance, and other body processes.
- Water is needed for all body processes.

Factors Affecting Eating and Nutrition

- Many factors affect nutrition and eating habits.
 - Age
 - Culture
 - Religion
 - Appetite
 - Personal choice
 - Body reactions
 - Illness
 - Disability

OBRA Dietary Requirements

- The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA) has requirements for food served in nursing centers:
 - Each person's nutritional and dietary needs are met.
 - The person's diet is well-balanced.
 - It is nourishing and tastes good.
 - Food is appetizing.
 - Hot food is served hot and cold food is served cold.
 - Food is served promptly.

Serving Food

- Food is prepared to meet each person's needs.
- Other foods are offered if the person refused the food served.
 - Substituted food must have a similar nutritional value to the first foods served.
- Each person receives at least 3 meals a day.
- A bedtime snack is offered.
- The center provides needed assistive devices and utensils.

Special Diets

- Doctors may order special diets for:
 - A nutritional deficiency
 - A disease
 - Weight control
 - To remove or decrease certain substances in the diet
- Regular diet, general diet, and house diet mean there are no dietary limits or restrictions.

The Sodium-Controlled Diet

- Certain diseases and drugs cause the body to retain extra sodium. Sodium causes the body to retain water.
- With too much sodium:
 - Tissues swell with water.
 - There is excess fluid in the blood vessels.
 - The heart has to work harder.
- Sodium control decreases the amount of sodium in the body.
- Sodium-controlled diets involve:
 - Omitting high-sodium foods
 - Not adding salt when eating
 - Limiting the amount of salt used in cooking

Diabetes Meal Planning

- Diabetes is a chronic illness in which the body cannot produce or use insulin properly.
- Diabetes is usually treated with insulin or other drugs, diet, and exercise.
- The meal plan involves:
 - Food preferences
 - Calories needed
 - The same amounts of carbohydrates, protein, and fat are eaten each day.
 - Eating meals and snacks at regular times

The Dysphagia Diet

- Dysphagia means difficulty swallowing.
 - A slow swallow means the person has difficulty getting enough food and fluids for good nutrition and fluid balance.
 - An unsafe swallow means that food enters the airway (aspiration).
 - Aspiration is breathing fluid, food, vomitus, or an object into the lungs.
- Food thickness is changed to meet the person's needs.

The Dysphagia Diet, cont'd.

- When feeding a person with dysphagia, you must:
 - Know the signs and symptoms of dysphagia.
 - Feed the person according to the care plan.
 - Follow aspiration precautions.
 - Report changes in how the person eats.
 - Observe for signs and symptoms of aspirations.
 - Report choking, coughing, difficulty breathing during or after meals, and abnormal breathing or respiratory sounds at once.

Fluid Balance

- Water is needed to live.
- Water is ingested through fluids and foods.
- Water is lost through:
 - Urine, feces, and vomit
 - The skin (perspiration)
 - The lungs (expiration)

Fluid Balance, cont'd.

- Fluid balance is needed for health.
 - The amount of fluid taken in (intake) and the amount of fluid lost (output) must be equal.
 - If fluid intake exceeds fluid output, body tissues swell with water. This is called edema.
 - Dehydration is a decrease in the amount of water in body tissues.
 - Fluid output exceeds intake.
- An adult needs 1500 milliliters (mL) of water daily to survive.
 - 2000 to 2500 mL are needed for normal fluid balance.

Fluid Balance, cont'd.

- To maintain fluid balance, the doctor may order the amount of fluid a person can have in 24 hours.
 - Intake records are kept.
 - Common orders are:
 - Encourage fluids
 - Restrict fluids
 - Nothing by mouth (NPO)
 - Thickened liquids

Meeting Food and Fluid Needs

- The following can affect appetite and ability to eat:
 - Weakness, illness, and confusion
 - Unpleasant odors, sights, and sounds
 - An uncomfortable position
 - The need for oral hygiene
 - The need to eliminate
 - Pain

Preparing for Meals

- Preparing patients and residents for meals promotes comfort.
- These dining programs are common in nursing centers:
 - Social dining
 - Family dining
 - Assistive dining
 - Low-stimulation dining
 - Restaurant-style menus
 - Open-dining

Serving Meal Trays

- You serve meal trays after preparing patients and residents for meals.
- If food is not served within 15 minutes:
 - Re-check food temperatures.
 - Follow agency policy.
 - If not at the correct temperature, get a fresh tray.
 - Some agencies allow re-heating in microwave ovens.

Feeding the Person

- Serve food and fluids in the order the person prefers.
- Offer fluids during the meal.
- Use teaspoons.
- Tell visually impaired persons what is on the tray.
 - Use the numbers on a clock for the location of foods.
- When feeding visually impaired persons, describe what you are offering.
- Allow time and privacy for prayer.
- Engage the person in pleasant conversation.
 - Allow time for chewing and swallowing.
- Sit facing the person.

Special Diets and Snacks

- Many special diets involve between-meal snacks.
 - They are served upon arrival on the nursing unit.
 - Provide needed utensils, a straw, and a napkin.
 - Follow the same considerations and procedures for serving meal trays and feeding persons.
- Calorie counts
 - The nurse tells you which persons need calorie counts.
- Patients and residents need fresh drinking water each shift and whenever the pitcher is empty.

Assisting With Special Needs

- When persons cannot eat or drink because of illness, surgery, or injury, the doctor may order:
 - Nutritional support
 - IV (intravenous) therapy
- Enteral nutrition is giving nutrients into the gastrointestinal tract through a feeding tube.
 - Gavage is the process of giving a tube feeding.
 - A naso-gastric (NG) tube is inserted through the nose into the stomach.
 - A gastrostomy tube (stomach tube) is inserted into the stomach.
 - It involves a surgically created opening.

Reporting Observations

● Report the following at once:

- Nausea
- Discomfort during the feeding
- Vomiting
- Distended abdomen
- Coughing
- Complaints of indigestion or heartburn
- Redness, swelling, drainage, odor, or pain at the ostomy site
- Fever
- Signs and symptoms of respiratory distress
- Increased pulse rate
- Complaints of flatulence
- Diarrhea

Aspiration

- Aspiration is a major risk from tube feedings.
 - It can cause pneumonia and death.
- Aspiration can occur:
 - During tube insertion
 - From tube movement out of place
 - From regurgitation (the backward flow of stomach contents into the mouth)
- To assist the nurse in preventing regurgitation and aspiration:
 - Position the person in Fowler's or semi-Fowler's position before the feeding.
 - Maintain Fowler's or semi-Fowler's position according to the nurse's directions and the care plan.
 - Avoid the left side-lying position.

Feeding Tubes

- Persons with feeding tubes usually are NPO.
 - Dry mouth, dry lips, and sore throat cause discomfort.
- These comfort measures are common:
 - Oral hygiene, lubricant for lips, and mouth rinses every 2 hours while the person is awake
 - Cleaning the nose and nostrils every 4 to 8 hours
- NG tubes can irritate and cause pressure on the nose.
 - They can change nostril shape or cause pressure ulcers.

IV Therapy

- Intravenous (IV) therapy (IV, IV infusion) is giving fluids through a needle or catheter inserted into a vein.
 - The doctor orders:
 - The amount of fluid to give (infuse)
 - The amount of time to give it in
 - The RN figures the flow rate.
 - The flow rate is the number of drops per minute (gtt/min).
 - You can check the flow rate.

IV Therapy, cont'd.

- Tell the RN at once if:
 - No fluid is dripping
 - The rate is too fast
 - The rate is too slow
 - The bag is empty or close to being empty
- You help meet the safety, hygiene, and activity needs of persons with IVs.
- You are never responsible for:
 - Starting or maintaining IV therapy
 - Regulating the flow rate
 - Changing IV bags
 - Giving blood or IV drugs