



Tips on Healthy Ageing

Nutrition and Ageing

Magnitude of the problem:

Good nutrition is important in determining health outcomes particularly as people get older. Malnutrition is very common among older people, with around 25% in community-dwelling and up to 85% reported for older people living in residential care. Malnutrition covers both over-nutrition, resulting in obesity or overweight, as well as under-nutrition, resulting in underweight or anorexia. Chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer have been closely associated with nutrition.

Risk factors associated with malnutrition:

- sedentary lifestyle and physical inactivity
- overeating or drinking alcohol over limit
- mental health including depression and dementia
- bereavement
- social isolation
- economic hardship
- medication use
- chewing and swallowing problems
- changes in senses and loss of appetite
- diseases

"We are what we eat". To ensure you are giving your body the best nutrition:

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods:

- Eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits
- Eat plenty of cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain
- Include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives
- Include milks, yoghurts, cheeses and/or alternatives
- Reduced-fat varieties should be chosen, where possible
- Drink plenty of water

Take care to:

- Limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake
- Choose foods low in salt
- Limit your alcohol intake if you choose to drink
- Consume only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars

Evidence based strategies for managing and treating the problem

- Be socially and physically active
- Eat a variety of nutritious foods
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Never try to lose weight without medical advice

If you have any concerns about your diet, loss of appetite, weight loss or gain or would like to know how to improve your nutritional intake, please consult a dietician or your doctor.

Links to other key websites on nutrition:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/PUBLICATIONS/synopses/dietsyn.htm>

<http://www.alcoholguidelines.gov.au/internet/alcohol/publishing.nsf/Content/home>