Nutrition Needs of Adult Day Care Participants

Lesson 1 Overview

Time
30 minutes

Purpose
To discuss nutrition needs of adult day care participants

Objectives
At the conclusion of this lesson, employees will be able to:

- Discuss the role of nutrition and the health and well-being of adult day care participants
- Describe ways to increase food intake of adult day care participants

Definitions

*Dementia:* Progressive disease that attacks the brain
*Developmental Disability:* Disability present at birth
*Traumatic Brain Injury:* Disability due to a significant injury to the brain causing permanent limitations

Materials

- Large box of crayons for Activity 1
- Flipchart and markers
- Handout 1: Icebreaker
- Handout 2: Special Nutrition Needs of Individuals With Disabilities
- Handout 3: Master List of Special Nutrition Needs of Individuals With Disabilities
- Lesson Evaluation
- Answer key for Lesson Evaluation
Lesson 1 Overview (cont.)

Activities

Activity 1: Icebreaker. The purpose of the icebreaker is to help employees think about how they interact with adult day care participants. Ask the employees to choose a color for themselves and for three center participants, including those with disabilities. Have them blend the color they choose for themselves with those of the participants. Discuss how their personality blends with the personalities of the participants. Use Handout 1.

Activity 2: Ask employees to think about the participants who have dementia and make a list of the ways the adult day care center meets the special nutrition needs of participants with dementia. Use Handout 2.

Activity 3: Ask employees to think about the participants who have developmental disabilities and make a list of the special nutrition needs required by these participants. Be sure to include consistency-modified diets and special adaptive equipment. Use Handout 2.

Activity 4: Ask employees to think about the participants who have traumatic brain injuries and make a list of the special nutrition needs required by these participants. Use Handout 2.

Activity 5: Ask employees to compare the lists from Activities 2, 3, and 4 and make a master list. Discuss the different needs of each group and the needs that overlap. Also, discuss the role of other health care providers working with adults with disabilities at the adult day care center. Use Handout 3.

Evaluation

Use the Lesson Evaluation to assess the employees’ knowledge of the concepts presented in this lesson.
Lesson 1 Overview (cont.)

References


Lesson 1 Content

Activity 1: Icebreaker

Tell: Meeting the nutrition needs of adult day care participants may be challenging because they might have difficulty communicating their needs. You are going to do an activity that will help you think about how you interact with participants.

Note: The materials needed for Activity 1 are a large box of crayons and Handout 1. The purpose of Activity 1 is to help employees think about how they interact with adult day care participants, including those with disabilities.

Discuss: Employees’ responses.

Note: Give a copy of Handout 1 to each employee. Place the box of crayons so that each employee has access to it. Make sure each employee understands the directions to Handout 1 before starting this activity.

Introduction

Tell: Adult day care centers serve both older participants and participants with disabilities. Think about the adults served at the center where you work.

Ask: What proportion of the participants in your center are adults with disabilities?

Ask: Do all of the participants have the same nutrition needs?

Tell: Participants in adult day care programs have multiple special needs. One of the main reasons older adults and adults with disabilities participate in adult day care is because nutritious meals are served. It is important that employees understand that providing nutritious meals to program participants is vital to maintaining their health and well-being.

As in other population groups in the U.S., participants in adult day care programs may be eating enough food, but not eating the right foods to give the body the necessary nutrients to be healthy.
Introduction (cont.)

Tell: The key principles of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide sound advice for adult day care programs:
- Make smart choices from every food group.
- Find balance between food and physical activity.
- Get the most nutrition out of calories.

The best way to obtain balanced nutrition is to eat a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day, while staying within daily calorie needs. According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, a healthy eating plan is one that:
- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars

To understand the nutrition needs of adult day care participants, it is important to understand the most common types of disabilities. They include:
- Dementia
- Developmental disabilities
- Traumatic brain injury

This lesson looks at these disabilities in more detail.

Dementia

Tell: Dementia is a progressive disease that attacks the brain. Characteristics of dementia include loss of:
- Memory
- Language skills
- Reasoning skills
- Ability to focus on tasks such as eating

Dementia occurs slowly over time.
- It can occur as early as age 30, but usually is diagnosed after age 60.
- It is described in three stages. The nutrition needs vary with each stage.

In the early stage of dementia:
- There is loss of interest in lifelong hobbies and activities because the person has forgotten how to do these tasks.
- There is a decreased tolerance for changes in the routine.
- The person may forget how to cook, use the microwave oven, or perform other routine tasks.
Lesson 1 Content (cont.)

Dementia (cont.)

Tell: The end result of the early stage of dementia can be poor nutrition because the person is unable to follow lifelong patterns of purchasing food, preparing food, and cleaning up the house.

In the intermediate stage of dementia:
- Individuals become more confused, forgetful, lost, and unable to communicate their needs.
- They may ask the same questions over and over.
- The dining area may be a confusing environment and meal time a frustrating experience because they have forgotten what to do.
- The use of eating utensils may be forgotten.
- Food preferences may change from day to day.

Some individuals with dementia are called wanderers.
- They are in constant motion and may be unable to sit still at a meal.
- Weight loss is a problem due to high energy needs and poor dietary intake.

In the late stages of dementia, total care is required. Adult day care centers are not designed to meet the needs of adults in the late stages of dementia.

Activity 2

Note: The materials needed for Activity 2 are a copy of Handout 2 for each employee, a flipchart, and markers. This activity can be done individually or in groups of two or three.

Tell: Think about the participants who have dementia. In the first column of Handout 2, make a list of ways the adult day care center meets the special nutrition needs of participants with dementia.

Discuss: Employees’ responses.

Note: Use the flipchart and markers to write down the employees’ responses.
Developmental Disabilities

Tell: Developmental disabilities are those that have been present since birth. There are over 4 million Americans with developmental disabilities. These individuals have limitations in at least three of the following areas:
- Self-care
- Language
- Learning
- Mobility
- Self-direction
- Capacity for independent living
- Economic sufficiency

According to the Report of the Surgeon General’s Conference on Health Disparities and Mental Retardation (U.S. Public Health Service, 2001), compared to the rest of the U.S. population, these individuals experience:
- Poorer health
- Shorter lifespans
- Less access to healthcare

Individuals with developmental disabilities tend to be younger than other adult day care participants.

Be sure the menus reflect the preferences of these participants.

Activity 3

Note: The materials needed for Activity 3 are a copy of Handout 2 for each employee, a flipchart, and markers. This activity can be done individually or in groups of two or three.

Tell: Think about the participants who have developmental disabilities. In the second column of Handout 2, make a list of the special nutrition needs of participants with developmental disabilities. Be sure to include consistency-modified diets and special adaptive equipment. Use Handout 2.

Discuss: Employees’ responses.

Note: Use the flipchart and markers to write down the employees’ responses.
Lesson 1 Content (cont.)

Traumatic Brain Injury

Tell: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2002) estimate that there are over 5 million Americans living with a disability resulting from a traumatic brain injury. These individuals can experience limitations in:

- Thinking and reasoning abilities
- Movement
- Sensation

The ability to eat can be negatively impacted by these limitations. These individuals may become confused in the dining area or unable to tolerate any changes in the mealtime routine.

Adaptive feeding equipment may be helpful for those with movement limitations and losses of sensation.

Like the individuals with developmental disabilities, these participants may be younger than other adult day care participants.

Be sure the menus reflect the preferences of these participants.

Activity 4

Note: The materials needed for Activity 4 are a copy of Handout 2 for each employee, a flipchart, and markers. This activity can be done individually or in groups of two or three.

Tell: Think about the participants who have traumatic brain injuries. In the third column of Handout 2, make a list of the special nutrition needs of participants with traumatic brain injuries.

Discuss: Employees’ responses.

Note: Use the flipchart and markers to write down the employees’ responses.
Lesson 1 Content (cont.)

Activity 5

Tell: Put Handout 2 in front of you. Look over the lists from Activities 2, 3, and 4 and find the needs that are the same for all three groups. Write the needs that are the same on Handout 3. This will be your master list of needs.

Discuss: The different needs of each group and the needs that overlap.

Note: Use the flipchart and markers to write down the needs that overlap (the master list).

Ask: What is the role of other health care providers working with adults with disabilities at the adult day care center?

Discuss: Employees’ responses.

Common Nutrition Problems of Adults With Disabilities

Tell: Common nutrition problems of adults with disabilities include:

- Poor appetite
- Consumption of smaller volumes of food
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Weight loss

Role of the Employees

Tell: As employees of an adult day care center, you play an important role in:

- Providing food that participants can eat
- Encouraging participants to eat
Lesson 1 Content (cont.)

Role of the Employees (cont.)

**Ask:** What are some ways that you as employees of an adult day care center can improve the dietary intake of participants with disabilities?

**Note:** Use a flipchart and markers to write down the employees' responses. Make sure the following key points are covered:
- Greet participants by name at meal times.
- Maintain eye contact when speaking to participants.
- Refrain from arguing.
- Honor changes in food preferences, cultural food preferences, and religious dietary requirements.
- Prepare and serve diets as ordered.
- Serve meals and snacks on time.
- Observe participants eating and report any concerns to the supervisor.
- Be calm and speak in low, soothing tones.

Lesson Evaluation

**Note:** The material needed is a copy of the Lesson Evaluation for each employee. Go over the directions with the employees before having them answer the questions.

**Discuss:** Employees’ responses.
1. If you could be a crayon, what color would you be? Color Box 1 the color that best describes your personality. For example: yellow = warm, blue = cool, hot pink = cheerful. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. We all perceive colors differently.

2. Below Box 1, list two or three words that best describe your personality.

3. Think about three different center participants, including a couple with disabilities. If each participant were a crayon, what color would he/she be? Color Boxes 2, 3, and 4 the color that best describes each participant’s personality.

4. Below each box, list two or three words that best describe each participant’s personality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1: Me</th>
<th>Box 2: Participant</th>
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5. Now, create three new colors in Boxes 2, 3, and 4 by blending the color you chose for yourself with the colors of your participants. Describe the way your personality blends with the personality of the participant. Do you feel the same toward every participant? Do you feel differently toward participants with disabilities?
# Handout 2

## Special Nutrition Needs of Individuals With Disabilities

Use for Activities 2, 3, and 4.

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# Handout 3

## Master List of Special Nutrition Needs of Individuals With Disabilities

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Lesson Evaluation

**Directions:** Write short answers for each question.

1. List at least one special nutrition-related consideration for a participant with dementia.

2. List at least one special nutrition-related consideration for a participant with a developmental disability.

3. List at least one special nutrition-related consideration for a participant with a traumatic brain injury.

4. List three things employees can do to encourage participants with disabilities to eat.
Lesson Evaluation: Answer Key

Directions: Write short answers for each question.

1. List at least one special nutrition-related consideration for a participant with dementia.
   Participants may forget how to use forks and spoons to eat.
   Participants may like to wander around the center at meal times.
   Participants cannot sit down long enough to eat a meal.

2. List at least one special nutrition-related consideration for a participant with a developmental disability.
   Participants may not clearly communicate food preferences.
   Participants may need special eating aids to feed themselves.

3. List at least one special nutrition-related consideration for a participant with a traumatic brain injury.
   Participants may have limited movement abilities making it difficult to self-feed.
   Participants may be unable to sense hot beverages and get burned easily with a hot beverage.

4. List three things employees can do to encourage participants with disabilities to eat.
   Greet participants by name at meal times.
   Maintain eye contact when speaking to participants.
   Refrain from arguing.
   Honor changes in food preferences, cultural food preferences, and religious dietary requirements.
   Prepare and serve diets as ordered.
   Serve meals and snacks on time.
   Observe participants eating and report any concerns to the supervisor.
   Be calm and speak in low, soothing tones.