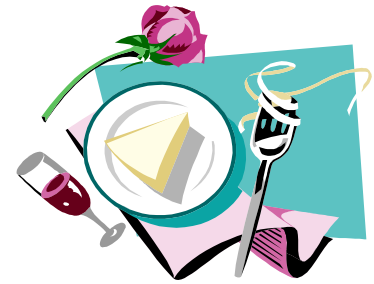

ENCOURAGE PROPER EATING

Making Mealtime Easier For Seniors Can Improve Nutrition

Sound nutritional practices can help to increase a person's chances of maintaining good health, as well as improve the quality of their daily experiences. Unfortunately, even in the U.S., malnutrition can be an issue for people over age 70 for a variety of reasons. When the elderly do not eat properly, a host of problems can ensue. In addition to lower energy, they become prone to more infections, injuries take longer to heal, surgery is riskier, and hospital stays are longer.

If you are caring for an elderly loved one, you can help insure proper nutrition by carefully monitoring eating habits at mealtime. At this stage in their life you are not likely to change someone's diet to vegetarian, or macrobiotic, or something more exotic. What's more important is that you simply help seniors eat enough of the foods that they have always accepted as part of a well-balanced diet.



The more comfortable and enjoyable you make the dining experience, the easier it will be for you to encourage proper nutrition.

CREATE A POSITIVE EATING ENVIRONMENT

Here are simple suggestions for making mealtime more pleasant and less of a chore to be avoided. Level of functioning should guide your choices. (When confusion or memory loss are significant, you may need to employ most of the suggestions.)

- ◆ Meals should be served at times and places that provide a comfortable routine.
- ◆ Make mealtime a highlight of the day.
- ◆ Reduce distractions. Make sure the person has used the bathroom. Avoid busy patterns on the plates, tablecloth, napkins, etc. Also, remove unnecessary items from the table.
- ◆ Turn the television off and play some soft, relaxing music.
- ◆ Make sure that the person is physically comfortable. Use well padded chairs. The table should not be too cold for the persons arms. Make sure that chewing is not a problem. (If so, consult their dentist.)

- ◆ Have food completely prepared and ready to eat before serving - dress the salad, butter the bread, cut food into small pieces, etc. Bowls and spoons are easier to use than plates and knives. Fill glasses half-full, use straws or cups with non-spill lids.
- ◆ Give simple, detailed instructions
 - ➔ If the person needs help with the process of eating, make the task as simple as possible. Speak clearly and slowly.
 - ➔ Break things down into simple steps. For example - 1) pick up the spoon, 2) put some peas on the spoon, 3) raise the spoon to your mouth, 4) put the peas in your mouth and chew them good.
- ◆ Prepare foods that can be eaten with the fingers, especially for those with dementia.

Note: It helps to combine the above suggestions



11023 Eucalyptus St., Ste 102
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
Office - 909-373-8670