






Older People

Specialist Group

The BDA Older People Specialist Group is making a pledge to:

-  help keep older people nutritionally 'well'
-  highlight the need to identify and act for older people who are nutritionally 'vulnerable'
-  champion an evidence based (NICE CG32¹ and QS24²), 'food first' approach to treating malnutrition in addition to or instead of prescribed nutritional supplements. We will:

Promote the need for a varied daily diet consisting of:

- Mealtimes as a positive experience that acknowledge the health benefits and pleasure of food
- Three to four meals with additional between meal snacks as appropriate
- At each meal:
 - Foods rich in starchy carbohydrate and fibre
 - Food rich in high quality protein
 - Fruits and vegetables
 - Foods containing calcium and vitamin D (to support bone health)
- All adults should consider taking 10ug Vitamin D supplement during autumn and winter months. If access to safe sunlight exposure is limited, consider daily 10ug Vitamin D supplement all year round
- Guidance for daily diet requirements comes from the 'Eatwell Guide'^{3*}.

**Notes: *The Eatwell Guide may not apply to those with special dietary requirements. Any special dietary requirements should be discussed with Dietitian or other healthcare professional
*For those needing to maintain or gain weight, the amount or proportion of different foods needed may differ from the 'Eatwell Guide'. *At end of life focus is usually on providing food and fluid for comfort and pleasure, rather than for nutritional adequacy.*

Promote good levels of hydration by highlighting⁴:

- The need for at least eight to ten mugs/glasses (200ml) of fluid throughout the day, every day
- That this may mean drinking more fluid than some older people are used to
- That all fluids, including drinks containing caffeine and alcoholic drinks of up to 4%, count towards our fluid intake, not just water

Promote a healthy weight by increasing awareness that:

- Healthy weight for older people may be higher than healthy weight for younger adults (a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 24 – 31 kg/m² can be considered healthy in people aged 70 years and over)⁵
- Losing weight is not a normal part of ageing, and eating the right amount of food to maintain a healthy weight may mean eating less for some and eating more for others
- Treating malnutrition using additional nutrient rich foods (a 'food first' approach) can be effective and can reduce inappropriate requests for prescribed nutritional supplements

Promote the importance of continued exercise/activity to:

- Maintain or improve muscle mass
- Improve appetite

Promote making each contact count conversations:

- To maintain good health and wellbeing for older people by using seven key questions which can help to identify key areas where support may be needed:
 1. Are you able to go out to shop for food or to access food when you need it?
 2. Are you able to prepare / access 3 – 4 meals per day?
 3. Are you able to prepare / access 2 - 3 between meal snacks per day?
 4. Are you able to prepare / access at least 6 - 8 hot or cold drinks per day?
 5. Do you need help with eating / drinking?
 6. Do you have any problems with your mouth, teeth or dentures which might stop you from eating?
 7. Are you thin or have you lost weight without trying to?



Further reading and resources⁶

Friends of the Elderly Guide to good nutrition and hydration in older age

BDA Food Fact Sheet Healthy Eating

BDA Food Fact Sheet Vitamin D

BDA Food Fact Sheet Malnutrition

Nutrition Diet Resource Eating Well with Dementia

BDA Food Fact Sheet Fluid (water & drinks)

BDA OPSG Losing weight is not part of aging

Dairy UK Bring it Back resources

Many thanks to Older People Matter – Food Group for permission to adapt from Leeds City Council Food Consensus Leaflet⁷

References

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3. Public Health England Eatwell Guide Available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide
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5. Winter, J. et al. BMI and all-cause mortality in older adults: a meta-analysis. Am J Clin Nutr. 2014 Apr;99(4):875-90. Available from: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24452240
6. British Dietetic Association Food Fact Sheets available from: <https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home>
7. Leeds City Council. Food Consensus Leaflet. Available from: www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Leeds-Food-Consensus-Leaflet.PDF