



## Hydration in Focus

Our social media team Stacey and Dove took over twitter for #malnutritionmonday to highlight the importance of dehydration prevention amongst older people. A series of six infographics were presented including various pieces of information on dehydration, its effects and key tips to encourage better hydration amongst older people. The main message of the day was "but first, a drink", a call to all those who support older people to start each interaction with a drink to help prevent dehydration.



**For more information follow the OPSG on twitter @BDA\_olderpeople**

## Alison's Updates

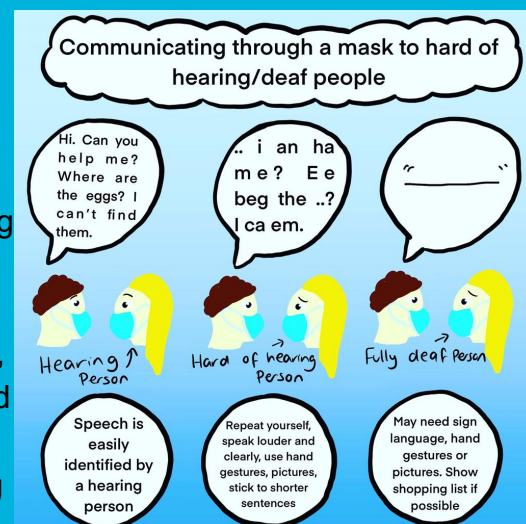


We all know that being overweight isn't good for health & Covid-19 has made that even clearer. However, like many aspects of nutrition throughout the life cycle, one size doesn't fit all & losing weight or having a BMI of less than 23 when aged over 80 may not achieve the same positive outcomes that we'd expect in a younger adult. Maintaining muscle mass through resistance exercise, together with a nutrient dense diet containing enough protein & micronutrients is key, and unless obese maintaining weight at a slightly higher BMI may actually be more protective for the older population.

## Focus on Communication

**Megan Hughes, RD, shares advice on communication when wearing a mask**

Being hearing impaired since the age of 2, I grew up relying on lip reading as my main form of communication, as well as listening to sound with lip movement. I have had many barriers throughout my life, however there were always ways to overcome those (informing others I need to lip read, using video calling instead of telephone etc). Before the covid crisis, I had never imagined a world where we could not see people's lips, but now I have the challenge of trying to communicate with others who are wearing a mask. I am unable to see facial expressions, sounds are more muffled and lips completely covered, making communication very difficult. Communication challenges that occurred in my dietetic placement, and my previous job at Tesco would often frustrate me. I know that this is not just limited to those who are born hard of hearing but also older people. So I felt that I needed to use that experience and come up with ways to communicate, when wearing a mask leads to communication challenges. I created this infographic to raise awareness as well as my personal tips to help communicate. I want to say to everyone who requires lip reading, do not lose hope, there are always solutions and ways to communicate with others, thanks to advancing technology like the transcribe apps. People are more understanding than you think! Never be afraid to tell someone how you communicate and always be proud of having the ability to lip read, for hearing people be patient and kind!



**@meganhughes91**

# Obesity and Older People

Written by Simone Roberts

Obesity has become a key message once again in the media, in no short measure due to the association between the negative clinical outcomes between Covid-19 and a high body mass index (BMI). Older people are not immune from the influence of these nutritional messages, however with complications of old age and the potential for obesity related sarcopenia this group of patients may need some additional support, when considering weight loss.

**For older adults, a BMI in the range of 23.0 to 29.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup> is associated with optimal longevity (1).**

Weight loss is not a normal part of ageing, however a reduction in fat free mass is. Changes in body composition lead to reductions in organ mass, skeletal mass, total body water and bone density and increases in total body fat. A higher percentage of fat is positively correlated with frailty in older adults (2). Furthermore physiologic height loss may result in overestimations of BMI making this estimation of "weight health" a tenuous one in older populations.

**Focus on movement to enable weight loss and to prevent muscle loss before considering a reduction in oral intake.**

It is important that any weight loss in older people is carefully managed, with support, and they (or those supporting them) are aware of the need for a cautious approach. It is likely that more older people will feel the need to fit into healthy weight categories, but an emphasis on the benefits of a higher BMI should be used to prevent excessive weight loss, which may lead to malnutrition. Education from dietitians will be key amongst the older population and other health care professionals to prevent long term poor health outcomes.



## Active indoors

Regardless of age, approximately 25% of diet induced weight loss will be fat free mass. Exercise, but specifically resistance based exercise helps to preserve this fat free mass. Research suggests that exercise can reduce this loss by up to 50%. Loss of muscle mass also leads to reduction in bone mass. Sufficient calcium and vitamin D intake, together with exercise, can support the preservation of bone mass density (3).

## Active resources

[NHS strength and flex activities](#)

[Radio 5 - 10 today physical activity for older people](#)

[One You - ten minute workouts](#)

[Sports England - Stay In, Work Out](#)



1. Winter, J.E., MacInnis, R.J., Wattanapenpaiboon, N., et al. (2014). BMI and all-cause mortality in older adults: a meta-analysis. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 99(4), 875-90.
2. Ponti, F., Santoro, A., Mercatelli, D., Gasperini, C., Conte, M., Martucci, M., Sangiorgi, L., Franceschi, C., & Bazzocchi, A. (2020). Ageing and Imaging Assessment of Body Composition: From Fat to Facts. *Frontiers in endocrinology*, 10, 861.
3. Beavers, K.M. et al. (2017). Change in Bone Mineral Density During Weight Loss with Resistance Versus Aerobic Exercise Training in Older Adults. *The Journals of Gerontology*, 72(11), 1582-1585.



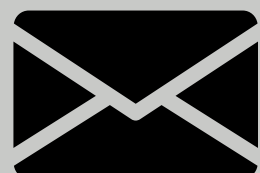
## Keeping in Touch

If you have something to share with the OPSG community, we would love to hear from you.

@BDA\_olderpeople



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