



Do Our Mouths Hold the Key?

Background for Facilitators

- [Seniors Oral Health](#)
- [How to Feed a Poor Appetite](#)
- [ADA: Aging and Dental Health](#)
- [ACL Combatting Senior Malnutrition](#)

Behavior Goals

Participants will:

1. Be able to identify that being physically active is pleasant.
2. Understand the connection between oral health and malnutrition.
3. Identify signs of malnutrition.
4. Be able to voice one preventative step in protecting oral health.

Meeting Preparation

1. Review the newsletter. Send questions or concerns to your coordinator.
2. Review the background resources (website links are provided above).
3. Review the game below on sugary drinks.
4. Choose one of the recipe options. Make the recipe at least once before the meeting. Write down helpful hints for the group. If virtual, have ideas on what to share about the recipe you tried.
5. Determine how to transport and taste featured food tasting.
6. If the meeting is virtual, prepare ideas for how to engage participants in the recipe making process.
 - a. Prepare a grocery list for the recipe chosen that can be sent with newsletter for participants to purchase
 - b. Demonstrate recipe making process on video and direct participants to the recipe in the newsletter.
 - c. If conference call: create a conversation about the recipe: serving size, freezing instructions, tips, discussion on ingredients, nutrition etc.

! The suggested wording for the presentation is in regular font and the *facilitator directions are in bold, dark red italic*. It's best not to read the presentation, but to use your own words, staying close to the meaning.

Props

- **Optional:** Picture or prop of mouth to show example mouth exam for challenge.
- **Optional:** Funny smile mask to discuss oral health topic.

Conversation

Welcome to Fresh Conversations! We are so happy to have you all here! Let's wrap up our last series on processed foods. Last meeting we discussed whole grains and serving sizes.

Can anyone tell me how you know if a food is a whole grain vs. refined grain?

When looking at the package, the first ingredient must say whole (i.e. whole wheat, whole grain, etc.)

Why is an ultra processed food harmful to our health in excess amounts?

It is harmful to our health in excess as the more processing a food undergoes, the less essential nutrients it contains and the increased likelihood of saturated fats, sodium, and sugars are added into the foods.

What are some healthy carbohydrates that you can add into your diet?

Brown rice, whole grain pasta, whole wheat bread, steel cut oats, fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, oatmeal

Has anyone added any of these foods into their diet recently?

Introduction

We are going to switch gears from our recent series on processed foods to malnutrition and oral health. We are going to do a deeper dive into these topics. When you think of the word malnutrition, what comes to mind?

Are there any physical features you think of? Are there any reasons that a person would become malnourished - financial, lack of access, poor education, disease, etc.

Nutrition Discussion

Malnutrition

Let's start to look closer into this term. "Malnutrition is defined as a lack of proper nutrients that leads to a change in body composition and health decline." Malnutrition may look a little different in everyone. In article 3, *The Myth of Malnutrition*, we explain the presence of malnutrition in all shapes and sizes. Malnutrition can occur in many ways and it is important not only to recognize it, but also prevent it. Use the screening tool at home from article 2, to determine your risk for malnutrition. Be sure to discuss with your primary care provider if you have any further questions and/or feel like you are malnourished.

But let's get to the part we can focus on and control - prevention! What are some key ways to prevent malnutrition? ***Ask a volunteer to read the list of tips from article 3 on preventing malnutrition.*** What is your reaction to these tips? Making meals social events can be difficult for those who live alone or if family and friends do not live nearby but we can find ways to get creative. One way would be to plan a lunch meal with a friend or family member using video technology. If you wanted to treat your friend or family member, you could have a meal delivered to their house and eat lunch together over the phone/tablet/computer.

Oral Health

Now that we have talked about malnutrition, where does oral health come in? Research has shown us that the two are closer than we think. Let's think about what poor oral health means and how it can affect our eating. What do you think are some problems we may have in our mouth that would change the way we eat? ***Typically issues begin with eating when we are missing more teeth, our gums are sore, our dentures do not fit well, and any tooth decay or pain while eating.***

As we get older, the risk of developing oral health problems gets higher and increases the likelihood that protein and nutrient rich foods will be tougher to eat. These foods are essential to our health! Just like we discussed what we can do to prevent malnutrition, let's talk about what we can do for our oral health also. ***Ask a volunteer to read the tips from article 4, under "What can I do for my own oral health?"***

One healthy habit is cutting back on sugary drinks. Let's play a game and discuss some of these drinks!

I will ask you to guess the number of teaspoons of sugar in each drink. ***As a reminder, one teaspoon is the size of a sugar cube and equal to 4 grams of sugar. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 recommend less than 10% of your calories should come from added sugars.***

1 bottle (20 oz) of sugar sweetened pop = 18 teaspoons

1 bottle (24 oz) of sports drink = 10 teaspoons

1 bottle (20 oz) of sweetened iced tea = 13 teaspoons

1 can (16 oz) energy drink = 14 teaspoons

1 cup (8oz) fruit drink = 12 teaspoons

Keep in mind all of these drinks are okay in moderation, but water is always best!

Let's end with some interesting oral health facts!

Did you know??

.....Americans cite bad breath as the least attractive trait a co-worker can have?

.....The average woman smiles about 62 times a day, while the average man smiles only 8 times. Women are also more likely to brush their teeth and visit the dentist regularly.

.....Each day, the average person spends 8.5 hours sleeping, 1 hour eating, 7.2 minutes volunteering and only 50 seconds brushing their teeth. Dentists recommend 2-3 minutes.

.....Americans spend \$100 billion per year on hair care products - and only \$2 billion a year on dental care products.

.....More seniors are aging with their natural teeth vs. dentures.

.....Contrary to popular belief, George Washington's famous dentures weren't made from wood. His four pairs of custom chompers were crafted from gold, ivory, lead, and a mixture of human, donkey, and hippopotamus teeth.

Challenge

Give your mouth a health exam:

- Teeth: Are they clean with no food or white or dark spots?
- Gums: Are they clean with no food at the gum line? Are they light pink with no swelling or bleeding? Are they tight up against the teeth?
- Moisture level: Are all surfaces moist with no cracked lips, bad breath, or sticky feeling in mouth or throat?
- Tongue & Lips: Are they free of lumps, bumps, or sores?

Please see a dental professional if you noticed anything unusual.

http://seniorsoralhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/Placemat2_Brush-Up-on-good-Dental-Health-Word-Find.pdf

Tasting Activity

Preferred Option: Split Pea Soup

Teaching Tips:

- It's a common misconception that you must soak split peas prior to cooking but they do not need to be soaked. You do want to pick over (check for pebbles and debris) and rinse and drain them.
- If freezing leftovers, don't forget to leave a gap at the top as it may expand while freezing. Recipe can be frozen for 2-3 months.

- Look for low sodium ham for a healthier soup.
- One serving of this recipe provides 16 g fiber. It is recommended to get 21-30 g fiber for older adults per day. This is a combination of the brown rice, split peas, and the vegetables.
- Skip the salt and add dried herbs and seasonings for more flavor. Try coriander, thyme, rosemary, sage and yellow curry.

Option 2: Smoothie

Pick one of each category to build a smoothie.

Milk/Liquid: Dairy Milk, Soy Milk, Water (4-8oz)

Leafy Greens: Kale, Spinach (½ cup - 1 cup)

Healthy Fats: Flax Seed, Chia Seed, Peanut Butter, Avocado (1-2 T)

Fruit: Frozen Strawberries, Mangoes, Blueberries, Pineapple, Peaches, Banana (1 cup)

Protein: Greek Yogurt, Protein Powder, Cottage Cheese (½ cup)

- Spinach and kale will change the color of the smoothie but virtually do not change the flavor.
- Leafy greens add very few calories but a lot of nutrients such as Vitamin A, Vitamin K, iron, and Vitamin C.
- Healthy fats help to absorb nutrients such as Vit A, K, D, and E. These are known as fat soluble vitamins and require fat to be present for proper absorption.

Physical Activity

Connection to the Take Action corner. - What is the next step you want to take in the next month?

1. Identify a playlist to listen to when being active.
2. Invite a family or friend to go for a walk.
3. Look at the forecast and identify and commit to getting active outside.

How do you feel after you are physically active? Full of energy? So glad you did it? A smile forming on your face? Ready to do it again the next day?

Does anyone know why we feel this way?

When we are active, our bodies release a chemical called endorphins. These reduce your perception of pain in your brain, and endorphins also make us feel good! This leaves us with a pleasant or even euphoric feeling. Physical activity is so good for our body, our brain wants us to remember how good it made us feel! In addition to short-term feelings of joy and less stress, it can also help to alleviate anxiety and depression.

What are some other mood boosters?

- Listening to music
- Connecting with friends or family
- Being outdoors
- Watching television
- Reading or listening to a book

These are all things that can be combined with physical activity to make it even more enjoyable.

Does anyone stay physically active no matter what the weather? Why is that?

Sometimes if the weather isn't ideal, it can be easy to skip physical activity that week. Staying active and getting outdoors is important year round. Connecting to nature may help keep seasonal affective disorder (SAD), depression and anxiety at bay because sunshine naturally increases the mood-boosting hormone serotonin.

When the forecast makes physical activity challenging, try these strategies.

1. Look at the forecast for the week as a whole.
2. Identify a couple of days that have the best conditions to get outdoors for some fresh air.
3. Identify some activities that can be done indoors. The internet is filled with free exercise videos. A great place to start is Spend Smart, Eat Smart's at-home beginner workouts. <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/video/at-home-workout-cardio-interval/>

Take Action

As we are wrapping up our meeting today, let's think about one tip that was discussed in the newsletter that you will focus on in your daily life. Let's all write this down on the last page of the newsletter.

It's important to take steps now to protect your oral health and also prevent malnutrition. Today we discussed many different tips we can all take to protect ourselves.

Is anyone willing to share what they plan to do?

Facilitator could wear a funny smile mask to lighten the mood for the end of the meeting.



This Month's Conversations

- Keeping your mouth healthy
- Are you malnourished?
- Stay warm with a hearty soup recipe

FRESH CONVERSATIONS

How to join:



Fresh Conversations is a social opportunity to connect with other older adults for a friendly discussion focused on nutrition and physical activity education. Join us right from the comfort of your home for a fun conversation that will help you learn how to maintain your health and independence during one of these sessions this month.

Contact:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Call 2-1-1 for food resources near you.

For more information on *Fresh Conversations*, contact the Iowa Department of Public Health at (515)782-9451