

Therapeutic Nutrition Benefits for Caregivers and Mature Workers

Benefits of Therapeutic Nutrition for Mature Workers Themselves

Nutrition is important for people of all ages. However, as you reach your older years or if you are chronically ill, you can be especially at risk for poor nutrition. Poor nutrition can happen because of poor eating habits or loss of appetite, decreased access to good or nutritious food because of limited mobility, money, or time. It can also result from ongoing illness or medical treatments.

Poor nutrition increases your own risk for serious health problems.

For mature workers and those battling serious illness or chronic disease, poor nutrition or malnutrition can result in the loss of muscle and other tissue, which can:

- Make it harder to recover from surgery and disease;
- Make it more difficult to heal wounds;
- Increase risk for infection;
- Increase risk for falls; and
- Decrease strength needed to take care of one's self.

When these things occur, they can lead to longer stays in the hospital or rehabilitation facility and readmission back to the hospital. These increased health problems can also make it more difficult for you to recover and return to work.

Warning signs of poor nutrition are often common.

Unfortunately, poor nutrition is often common in mature workers who have an acute illness or chronic disease. You need to take action and alert your health care professional if you have any of the warning signs of poor nutrition.

These warning signs include:

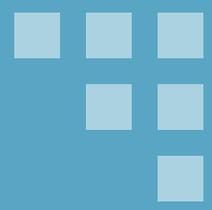
- Eating poorly;
- Chewing and swallowing difficulties;
- Taking multiple medicines; and
- Unplanned weight loss.

Therapeutic nutrition can help treat poor nutrition. You will find some information below, more guidance—including nutrition screening tools and tip sheets—is included in other sections in this toolkit. You can also talk to your doctor or registered dietitian (RD) for more help.

Therapeutic nutrition helps you heal.

Therapeutic nutrition—or the use of specific nutrients and food products in the right quantity to help manage a health problem—is a good way for you to help take care of your health. Therapeutic nutrition cannot prevent health problems, but it may help reduce complications, hospital stays and the need for more expensive medical care. It can also benefit you by helping you recover and return to work.





Therapeutic nutrition works by making sure that the body gets the balanced mix of nutrients it needs to fight an ongoing health problem. It can be used by itself as recommended by a doctor or registered dietitian, or along with other medical care.

When you are sick, your body needs extra nutrition as fuel. If you do not have enough fuel, your body might break down the protein in your muscles and use that as fuel. This can leave you feeling weak and less able to fight infections. Therapeutic nutrition provides fuel to help keep your muscles strong and help you recover more quickly.

Therapeutic nutrition can also help other treatments work better and may cut down on the length of hospital stays and reduce costs. Some therapeutic nutrition products are created by nutrition specialists to help in the dietary management of specific health problems like cancer, kidney and lung disease, and other conditions.

Therapeutic nutrition is an area where you can take charge

Nutrition is an important part of your own health that you can manage. What you eat affects how your body responds to medical conditions, hospitalizations, and treatments. A healthy diet will help your body stay stronger.

Educating yourself about the nutritional side of a health problem is the first step. The different nutrition information we hear every day can be confusing. It can be hard to separate fact from trend. Like most people you may have questions about how therapeutic nutrition works. This program can help and gives you lots of specific information. Be sure to talk to your loved one's doctor or registered dietitian for more information too.