

Caregiver's Corner



Nutrition Management for the At-Home Caregiver

A Better Diet for Better Health

A healthy diet is important to good health, and vital for a person's body to function at its best. Following an extended illness, the body needs extra calories and nutrients to assist in healing and recovery. Here are some tips to ensure your loved one's nutritional needs are met for optimum health.

Plan Ahead

Talk to friends or family about helping with shopping and meal preparation. Does your loved one need help permanently, or for a short period of time?  Make a shopping list that will help stock the pantry and freezer for a while. This will cut back on your need for frequent shopping trips, and also will assist any caregivers to select foods of your loved one's choice. Include foods they like to eat even when they are not feeling well.

You may choose to cook in advance and freeze in meal-size portions. For instance, choose one day a week you will do the cooking, and cook for the week. Meals can be frozen and warmed later.

Choose Healthy Snacks

Include nutritious snacks on the shopping list to keep on hand. When your loved one is not feeling well, the best snacks are those that are ready-to-eat, or require little preparation time.

When choosing foods, avoid foods that may cause further irritation of a medical condition (example: loose stools - avoid raw fruits & vegetables, popcorn, etc.).



Nutritious Snacks Made Easy

<i>bread/toast</i>	<i>milkshakes</i>
<i>hot or cold cereal</i>	<i>muffins</i>
<i>cheese</i>	<i>nuts</i>
<i>crackers</i>	<i>peanut butter</i>
<i>dips</i>	<i>popcorn</i>
<i>fruit, any kind</i>	<i>pretzels</i>
<i>gelatin</i>	<i>sandwiches</i>
<i>granola</i>	<i>soups</i>
<i>healthshakes</i>	<i>sports drinks</i>
<i>ice cream</i>	<i>vegetables</i>
<i>juices</i>	<i>yogurt</i>

It may be helpful to encourage your loved one to eat several small meals a day, rather than three large meals. For a boost in nutrition, consider healthy shakes and drinks.

A Special Treat

Help your loved one make the most of the mealtime experience. Whether dining with someone else, or eating alone, set the table or table tray as if entertaining, using pleasant tableware, fresh flowers, or a candle. When we feel good about mealtime, we feel more like eating.

Consult Your Doctor

These suggestions are meant for persons with no dietary restrictions. Please consult your doctor if he or she has suggested a low sugar, low sodium or another special eating regimen. Additionally, your physician can refer you to a registered dietitian to address specific concerns you may have about your loved one's nutritional status.