General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Health Promotion and Aging in Adults with IDD

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Introduction

- Good nutrition is important to good health and quality of life.
- Physiological changes and changes in nutritional patterns put older adults at risk for nutritional concerns.
- Older adults with IDD are at increased risk for poor health.
Overview

Nutrition concerns with aging
- Decreased food intake
- Dehydration
- Inadequate intake of certain vitamins and minerals
- Obesity

Physical activity
- Benefits and promotion in older adults
- Strategies to overcome barriers
Poor Food Intake

Contributing factors:

- Decreased appetite
- Impaired sense of smell or taste
- Poor dentition
- Secondary to a chewing or swallowing issue
- Memory loss or missed hunger cues
- Social factors
- Depression

Poor food intake can lead to weight loss, muscle loss, malnutrition and reduced quality of life
Dehydration in aging can be related to:

- Decreased fluid intake caused by diminished sense of thirst
- Increased losses (i.e. increased urine output from medications such as diuretics)

Dehydration can present as:

- Symptoms may include headache, confusion, constipation, change in blood pressure, dizziness, dry mouth/nose, electrolyte imbalances
- Falls, confusion, change in level of consciousness, weakness, increased fatigue
Inadequate Intake of Calcium and Vitamin D

Calcium and Vitamin D

- Adequate intake contributes to maintaining bone mineral density (BMD) and decreasing risk for fractures.
- Risk for low BMD increases with certain medication use, inadequate physical activity and low intake of calcium and vitamin D.
Intake of Calcium and Vitamin D

Calcium- Aim for 3 daily servings of calcium rich foods
- Dairy or fortified alternatives
- Green leafy vegetables
- Almonds

Vitamin D- Best dietary sources
- Fortified dairy or non-dairy alternatives, cereal or juice
- Fatty fish (salmon, tuna and mackerel)

Prevention is key!
Inadequate Intake of Vitamin B12

Aging and vitamin B12

- Decreased ability to absorb B12 with age
- Deficiency symptoms can mimic Alzheimer’s or other chronic neurological conditions

Symptoms of deficiency include:

- Dementia and confusion
- Extreme fatigue and weakness
- Tingling in the arms and legs
- Anemia
Vitamin B12 Dietary Sources

Vitamin B12- best dietary sources
- Red meats, turkey, chicken, fish, shellfish
- Fortified cereals
Obesity

Prevalence of obesity is higher among adults with IDD than in the general population

- Obesity increases risk of associated chronic diseases
- Impacts quality of life
- Places more demand on caregivers

Barriers to healthy eating:

- Poor diet quality
- Lack of support in making healthy food choices
- Difficulty with chewing or swallowing food or aversions to the texture of foods
- Medications that can contribute to weight gain and changes in appetite
Individualized Plan of Care

- Interdisciplinary team
- Determine specific needs
- Create individualized plan of care
- Involve the individual to promote autonomy
- Involve primary caregivers to reinforce understanding
Addressing Nutrition Concerns

- Support regularly scheduled meals and snacks
- Ensure meals are culturally appropriate, reflect dietary preference and take into account medical considerations
- Offer feeding assistance during mealtimes as needed
- Consider chewing and swallowing ability
- Offer meals in a pleasant environment, with others, if possible
- Monitor food, fluid, nutrient intake and weight to ensure needs are met
- Provide support to help individuals choose healthy foods
Promoting Healthy Eating for Adults with IDD

Recommendations include:

- Choose nutrient dense foods
- Fill half the plate with fruits and vegetables
- Choose whole grains over white grains
- Avoid highly processed snack foods and high fat meats
- Focus on protein rich foods to preserve lean muscle mass
  - Some evidence that a Mediterranean-style diet may be beneficial to slow age-related cognitive decline
- Drink water throughout the day

Source: CDC
Physical Activity for Older People with IDD

Adequate physical activity is associated:

- Healthy weight maintenance
- Decreased risk of chronic diseases
- Improvements in psychological well-being
- Improved quality of life

CDC recommends 150 minutes of physical activity per week

- Brisk walking
- Dancing
- Adapted group classes
- Strength and flexibility training
Barriers to Physical Activity

Older adults with IDD face many barriers to physical activity

Social and physical accessibility challenges:
- Limited community resources or adapted programs
- Lack of transportation
- Physical disability or mobility impairment
- Lack of social acceptance
- Limited financial resources
- No community and/or personal supports
Tips to Increase Physical Activity

- Start slowly and gradually increase intensity
- Split activity into short periods
- Choose activities that people ENJOY
- Provide support to persons trying to increase physical activity
- Group exercise can offer social interaction
- Remember it may take time to incorporate regular activity into one’s lifestyle
Multidisciplinary Care

Coordinate care between providers to address specific needs to support wellness

- Physician or Physician Assistant
- Nurse
- Dietitian
- Social Worker
- Case Manager
- Physical Therapist
- Care Coordinator
- Direct Support Professional
- Family Members
Conclusion

- Identified several nutrition concerns
- Identified strategies to promote optimal quality of life

Remember: It’s never too late to encourage healthy eating and physical activity, no matter a person’s age!
Resources for Physical Activity

The ARC
- Advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Community based therapeutic recreation
- Program offerings include cooking classes, walking clubs, basketball clinics, bootcamp exercise classes, aquatics

YMCA
- May offer inclusive programs like adaptive swimming

Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Universal Access Program
- Offer outdoor recreation opportunities for people of all abilities

Disabilityinfo.org
- INDEX website offers listing of recreational opportunities for people with disabilities
Resources for Nutrition

My Plate
- A practical source of information and guide to help individuals find healthy eating solutions

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- Offers support for public health strategies and programs that improve dietary quality, support healthy development, and reduce chronic disease

More Matters
- An online campaign that helps people eat more fruits and vegetables by providing recipes and supports

MassLeague.org
- A comprehensive list of health centers in Massachusetts that include nutritionists who are available for inexpensive consultations and classes

Grocery Store Nutritionists
- Grocery store chains such as Stop & Shop and BigY have in-store nutritionists who offer free advice, classes, and shopping demos periodically
Additional Webinars on Aging with IDD

General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Understanding Age Related Changes
- The Role of Polypharmacy
- Identifying and Assessing Pain
- Behavior Related Changes and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Health Promotion and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Mobility and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Aging with Down Syndrome
- Aging and Cerebral Palsy

Dementia and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Introduction to Dementia and Aging with IDD
- Early Evaluation of Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease
- Stages of Alzheimer’s Disease
- Applying the Knowledge to Dementia Caregiving and Caregiver Support
- Caregiving in Action: Case Studies and Practical Tips
Additional Aging with IDD Resources

Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation & Research
http://shriver.umassmed.edu/cdder/aging_idd_education
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