Nutrition in Old Age

Eating on the run is something that we are all familiar with and probably have done more than we would care to admit. However, it is important to remember no matter how busy you may be, to take the time to sit down and eat a balanced, nutritious meal. With every meal, we need essential nutrients to maintain our good health and longevity.

Below is a list from FutureYears.com that states the reasons why most seniors in the United States don’t eat balanced meals:

- Improper nutritional habits
- Lack of appetite
- Altered sense of taste and smell
- Bad condition of dentures
- Half or full prostheses
- Higher vitamin and mineral requirement to counter the effects of medication
- Unhealthy digestion, poor nutrient uptake
- Frequent suffering from various diseases
- Side-effects of drugs
- Psychological disorders
- Social isolation, financial problems

The United States Department of Agriculture Dietary Guidelines suggests that seniors should eat a balanced meal that consists of fruits, veggies and whole-grains that can be found on the food chart, “nutrition for old age.” Or read our book, “Happy to 102: The Best Kept Secrets to a Long and Happy Life” to learn more about the super foods one should be eating and other lifestyle changes you can make to better your quality of life.

Remember you are what you eat, so eat healthy!

Letter from the Editor:

Fall is flying by and the fact that we are already into the month of November is slightly startling (where does the time go?), yet exciting! November kicks off not only the holiday season but also National Home and Hospice Month with National Home Aide Week from the 14th to the 20th. As both are central to our passion for senior care, it is a wonderful time to recognize and show appreciation for all the caregivers in your life. To show our appreciation, we have included an article about one of our own caregivers, Zoe Kelly, from Home Care Assistance San Diego, who was named “Caregiver of the Month” by The Caregiver’s Voice. We also have a Caregiver Spotlight article featuring Kobe Simpson of Home Care Assistance of Chicago. Both caregivers have offered exceptional care, dedication and compassion to their clients and continue to exemplify the high quality standards we pride ourselves in at Home Care Assistance.

Another highlight of November (or October in Canada!), and a favorite holiday of mine, is Thanksgiving. This is an exciting time for friends and family to come together and celebrate what they are thankful for and to indulge in a feast of turkey, stuffing and other mouthwatering dishes. Holidays can be hard for seniors who have lost a spouse or have family that live far away. If you know this is the case for a neighbor or friend, invite them to join your Thanksgiving dinner and festivities – it may mean more to them than you realize.
I read a great article in the New York Times regarding centenarians and the three R’s of living longer: resolution, resourcefulness and resilience. Centenarians who are living a longer, more quality life are “physically active, have extensive social networks and maintain strong ties with family and friends. They are also less likely to be depressed than the average 60-year-old,” according to a study done in Sardinia.

Past research on genetics shows that lifestyle plays a pertinent role in what results in the average person living up to 100 and on. “A Swedish study of identical twins separated at birth and reared apart concluded that only about 20 to 30 percent of longevity is genetically determined. Lifestyle seems to be the more dominant factor.”

Many of the lifestyle concepts discussed in the article coincide with the main concepts of our book Happy to 102: The Best Kept Secrets to a Long and Happy Life. Just like the article, Happy to 102 lays out many of all the same factors - diet, exercise, sociability, mental challenge and sense of purpose. These factors make a substantial difference not only in how long we live, but in how well we live. Based on the ground breaking Okinawa Centenarian Study, Happy to 102 spells out precisely what it takes to delay or escape Alzheimer’s and other chronic diseases, as well as how to slow the aging process.

TCV’s Caregiver of the Month of October – June Kelly

Congratulations to June “Zoe” Kelly - The Caregiver’s Voice first Caregiver of the Month because of her dedication, sincerity, and excellence as a caregiver

Zoe was hired by the Home Care Assistance office in San Diego, California in April 2009. After excellent reviews from her initial assignments, she was placed in a very difficult situation three months
later. Zoe was assigned to take care of live-in clients, Dominic and Mary, an elderly couple living in Encinitas, California. Dominic had rapidly failing health and Mary was suffering from early dementia. A month after Zoe was assigned to the case, Dominic passed away and Zoe was confronted with assisting a grieving eighty-five-year-old widow.

Zoe’s immediate goal was to assist Mary through the grieving process in order to avoid the physical and mental decline that often follows when a beloved spouse passes. Zoe found aspects of The Balanced Care Method™ to be of the greatest help to Mary. When Mary lost her appetite, Zoe used her culinary skills to create a varied, nutritious menu of small meals and coaxed Mary to eat as much as possible. Mary eventually regained her appetite. Zoe also made certain that Mary participated in regular physical activity, including walks around the block, shopping trips, and drives to the beach to keep her body fit and healthy.

Another goal that Zoe set for Mary was to keep her mentally active. Zoe engaged Mary in a variety of activities that they would do together like reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, and discussing current events and other topics of interest.

While Zoe led Mary in pursuing mental and physical activities, she encouraged Mary to continue doing as many activities as she could independently, so that Mary felt she was maintaining her independence.

Zoe also helped Mary maintain social ties and achieve calm by encouraging Mary to continue attending church and directing her attention to other small social projects. In fact, Zoe discovered an amazing charity project called “Knit-a-Square,” which encourages volunteers to knit or crochet eight-inch squares that are shipped to South Africa and made into blankets for AIDS orphans. Last year, Zoe and Mary shipped twenty squares to South Africa. They have a new goal for 2010; to make 105,000 squares! This is a perfect example of how Zoe helps the lives of more than just her clients.
Caregiver Spotlight: Kobena (Kobe) Simpson

Kobena (Kobe) Simpson has been a compassionate caregiver for over four years and an outstanding employee for Home Care Assistance of Greater Chicago since 2009. Kobe’s career began when he started caring for his grandfather after he had suffered a stroke. It was this experience that inspired him to earn his CNA and to professionally care for people who couldn’t care for themselves. Kobe stands out as an exceptional caregiver because of his commitment to his job and the people with whom he works. His passion for caregiving is overtly apparent in the way he assists and works with his clients. Kobe believes The Balanced Care Method™ is a highly effective program for improving his client’s overall quality of life and successfully implements it whenever possible.

Kobe has a wonderful relationship with his current client who has Multiple System Atrophy. He constantly works to find new ways to improve his client’s strength. When needed, Kobe helps him to take steps and provides him with soothing, therapeutic physical massages to exercise his muscles and improve his circulation. In addition to performing his caregiver duties, he shares a genuine interest in soccer with his client. Together they watch matches and cheer for their teams. The time they spend together is always meaningful and continues to strengthen their bond.

“It was a change to have someone else in our home,” admits the client’s wife. But now, “Kobe is part of that family – he’s like one of the grandkids.” The family appreciates Kobe’s compassionate approach to his client and his work. The client’s son is also extremely appreciative of Home Care Assistance’s dedication to his father, “The folks at Home Care Assistance are completely committed to Dad’s physical and cognitive health – they have been constantly involved and they have established a strong relationship with him, so that he can focus on himself. The company and their caregivers clearly take a holistic approach to their clients and their care.”

*Kobe, we thank you for all your wonderful, heartfelt efforts to improve the quality of life for our clients and their families!*

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