

Good Nutrition is Essential for Skin Health

- Nutrition is important in the prevention and management of wounds
- Adequate energy (calories), protein, fluids, vitamins and minerals are needed to maintain skin integrity, heal wounds and prevent infection
- Each step of the wound healing process is dependent on adequate nutrition
- It takes a team effort to optimize nutritional intake



Comprehensive Nutrition Assessment

- Malnutrition Screening

- Use validated screening tool (CNST)
 - Refer all positive screens to RD
- Malnutrition is associated with:
 - Increased risk of developing pressure ulcer
 - Preventing or delaying wound healing

- Weigh Patients

- Weight helps guide energy and protein requirements for wound healing
- Weigh on admission and then weekly in acute care and monthly in LTC

- Assess patient intake

- How is the patient's appetite?
- How much do they eat?
 - Document intake in medical record – describe intake with fractions or percentages for each meal eaten
- Is the patient drinking enough?
 - Does the patient need additional fluids due to diarrhea, emesis, fever, draining wounds or high output ostomies?
 - *Patients on thickened liquids are at higher risk of dehydration*
- Complete accurate calorie counts when ordered



Comprehensive Nutrition Assessment

- Assess for barriers to food intake:
 - Is the patient interrupted or distracted at meals?
 - Is the patient sitting upright and tray in reach?
 - Does the patient need help opening packages, cutting food or need assist with eating?
 - Does the patient have difficulty with nausea, pain, chewing or swallowing?
- Refer the patient to the RD for:
 - ALL patients with malnutrition or at risk of malnutrition or at risk of skin breakdown
 - ALL patients with a new or existing wound (even if they are eating well)
 - If patient is eating 50% or less of their meals for 3 consecutive days
 - Poorly controlled diabetes



Develop Nutrition Care Plan

- Dietitian will provide an individualized assessment and care plan to ensure patients receive adequate:
 - **Protein:** patients with wounds require higher protein intake for synthesis of cells and tissue. RDs assess protein requirements and will consider many factors including: patient weight, current nutrition status, size and number of wounds and other health conditions such as CKD.
 - **Calories:** wound healing is an anabolic event – patients need extra calories from carbohydrate and fat to spare protein. Even if a patient is eating well on a standard diet they may not be getting enough calories.
 - **Vitamins/Minerals:** RD will assess for suspected or confirmed deficiencies and make recommendations for supplementation
 - **Fluids:** dehydration may contribute to impaired wound healing and risk of further skin breakdown. RD will assess fluid requirements and will consider factors including: weight, fluid losses and health conditions such as CHF & CKD



Nutrition Care Plan

- Strategies to optimize intake based on RD assessment may include:
 - Offering high calorie, high protein foods
 - Nutritional supplements (i.e. Ensure/Boost, Beneprotein, Med Pass)
 - Liberalizing dietary restrictions and addressing food preferences
 - Review strategies to address food intake barriers
 - Review blood glucose management
 - Education with patient and support person
 - Discourage efforts for weight loss at this time
 - Discuss benefits and harms of enteral nutrition when food intake is inadequate in light of preferences and goals of care



Evaluate nutrition – related outcomes

- Evaluate on a regular basis and in discussion with the patient, family and health-care team
 - Is the patient hydrated?
 - Is the patient achieving and maintaining food-related nutrition goals?
 - Have the barriers to eating been successfully removed?
 - Is the wound healing?
 - Is the patient maintaining or gaining weight as needed?
 - Are the recommended nutrition supplements tolerated?
 - Are blood sugars in target?
- **Remember nutrition care should be collaborative and use a patient-centred approach. A successful nutrition care plan benefits from the support of all Health Care Professionals**

