



Manual for Diet & Nutrition

During this module you will be asked some questions to simply provoke thought and test your current knowledge please have a note pad or supervision workbook to hand to make notes. Your performance will only be measured on the answers you select when completing the knowledge test at the end of the module.

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Learning Outcomes

- Understanding how to assist individual to choose their food and drink
- Knowing the balanced-diet principles
- Understanding nutritional guidelines
- Understanding how to promote nutrition in health and social care settings

Complementary manuals

- Malnutrition
- Food Hygiene and Safety

Chapter One

Significance of Diet

The Care Quality Commission essential standards of quality and safety

Outcome 5: Fulfilling nutritional essentials

- People who use services are supported to have adequate nutrition and hydration
- Providers offer choices of food and drink to meet diverse needs, making sure that it is nutritionally balanced and supports health.

As diet has such an impact on human health it is essential that care providers do everything possible to ensure that clients eat and drink adequate amounts of suitable foodstuffs. They should:

- Provide varied menu choices reflecting diverse needs
- Ensure equality of provision e.g. people with special diets are also given choice
- Inform and educate staff and clients about healthy lifestyles
- Actively seek client feedback to improve catering
- Encourage catering staff to interact with clients
- Offer opportunities for clients to prepare foods or contribute to meal preparations

Before we start take a moment to consider what you believe to be healthy or unhealthy foods. Why not make a list so you can review it later?

Health?

Unhealthy?

There is very little agreement among health professionals as to what exactly people should do to maintain and improve their health and general wellbeing. However, it seems likely that if you want to live a long and healthy life doing the following will make this more likely:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise regularly
- Avoid cigarettes and recreational drugs
- Drink alcohol in moderation

The effects of exercise, cigarettes and drugs are looked at in manuals such as Diabetes Awareness and Stroke Awareness; this manual will cover the food and fluids that people consume.

The foods we eat need to support our body's growth and repair; enable the production of hormones and regulate bodily functions; promote good organ function and provide us with energy. A poor diet lacking in adequate nutrition can lead to the following:

- Lack of energy
- Poor physical health
- Reduced ability to concentrate
- Organ damage
- Poor mental health
- Increased risk of specific illnesses e.g. diabetes, heart disease and stroke
- Increased time to heal or repair after injuries

Note: The aim of this manual is to provide you with an understanding of eating for good health. If you have particular concerns about malnutrition and supporting clients who are at risk, there is a separate Ecert HealthCare Training manual which focuses on assessment and special diets. (It's called 'Malnutrition').

It is important to take a realistic approach to promoting healthy eating to your clients, bear in mind the following:

- The word 'diet' does not refer to a slimming plan, it's whatever you eat
- Older people are more likely to be malnourished than obese
- There is no such thing as the perfect diet

Standard food habit

Our bodies require fuel to function provided by the foods we eat; the units of fuel are called calories and we need to eat the right amount of these to meet our personal fuel needs.

All foods provide calories; the more we do the more calories we need. Broadly speaking, men should eat around 2,500 calories a day to maintain weight, while women should eat 2,000. However, actual requirements depend on a number of factors including age, activity levels, general health and mobility. A female athlete could need 4,000 calories a day to perform well while an elderly gentleman with restricted mobility might need less than half of this.

Calories are stored by the body so any excess will increase a person's weight while someone who eats less than they need will burn stored calories and lose weight.

(This manual looks at the needs of adults; children (particularly under 5s) have very different nutritional requirements.)

The website www.nhs.gov.uk gives advice on diet following the department of health's official guidelines. For simplicity foods are split into five groups:

1. Fruit and vegetables.
2. Starchy foods, such as rice, pasta, bread and potatoes.

3. Meat, fish, eggs and beans.
4. Milk and dairy foods.
5. Foods high in fat and sugar.

(NHS 2013)

A 'balanced' or 'healthy' diet should be mostly made up of foods from the first four categories; foods from the fifth category should only be eaten occasionally. Check your table on page 4 and see if your healthy / unhealthy split fits with this advice.

Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins and minerals form a small but essential part of the foods we eat.

Vitamins A, D, E and K are fat soluble; this means that we can store them in our bodies and do not need daily amounts, just a regular intake. Vitamin D can be made in our bodies if we are exposed to enough sunlight; most people get adequate exposure even during a British winter but anyone who doesn't will need to eat appropriate foods or take a supplement. People who might be at risk include anyone who is housebound and fair skinned people who wear sunblock a lot of the time.

Fat soluble vitamins are found in foods such as oily fish, dairy products and eggs.

The B vitamins, folic acid and vitamin C are water soluble and must be eaten daily. Vitamin C is found in a wide range of fruit and vegetables; folic acid is in green vegetables, brown rice and fortified cereals. There are several different B vitamins found in a range of foods; for further information try www.nhs.uk.

There are 15 different minerals that should be included in our diet; they are calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium, phosphorus, iron, zinc, selenium, copper, fluoride, chloride, iodine, manganese, chromium and cobalt. The NHS website is useful for information about the benefits of these elements, where you can find them and the amounts you need to eat.

Salt instruction

Although sodium is a necessary mineral it's important not to eat too much of it as it has been linked to raised blood pressure which is a major factor of life threatening conditions including heart attack and stroke.

The average person should limit themselves to 6g a day while people who already have high blood pressure should stick to 3g. Salt is present in many foods so you should avoid adding it while cooking and discourage people from salting food on their plate.

It is best to get the vitamins and minerals you need from the foods you eat and other natural sources, however, there may be times when supplements are necessary. For example:

- During pregnancy
- Because of illness
- If you drink or smoke heavily

- If you are on a special; or restricted diet
- If you are suffering from a deficiency condition, such as anaemia from lack of iron

If you think that you might benefit from taking supplements ask your GP for advice as some can be harmful in large amounts.

This manual is based on the current advice for healthy living from the Department of Health.

Chapter Two

Preparing balanced diet

As we saw in the previous Chapter, foods are split into 5 groups. In this Chapter we will look at each of these categories in more detail and look at the role of fluids as well.

Fruit and Vegetables

Fruit and vegetables have the following benefits:

- They provide a range of vitamins and minerals
- Some contain antioxidants which may help to reduce the likelihood of cancers
- They are generally low in fat, particularly saturated fats
- They are a good source of fibre

As most people are aware the government promotes a '5 a day' approach to fruit and vegetables but this should probably be seen as a minimum aim. Eating a variety of different fruits and vegetables will ensure that you eat a range of vitamins and minerals. A good tip is to eat different coloured foods as colour can be an indicator of nutritional content.

It can be good to eat fruits and vegetables prepared in different ways; although it is generally best to eat foods in as unprocessed a form as possible, scientists have found micronutrients which are present at higher levels when the item is cooked e.g. lycopene, an antioxidant in tomatoes. Ideally at least one item a day should be eaten raw and people who need to limit their calorie intake should try to eat fruit and vegetables without added fats or sugars.

Dried fruits should only be 1 of your 5 a day as although they are high in fibre, they are also high in sugar, (a portion is about a handful). The same is true of juices; they are high in sugar and low in fibre, (a portion is a glass (150 mls).

People who are underweight may benefit from the addition of sauces or dairy products that can make the foods more palatable and increase calorie values; for example butter and milk or cream can be added to mashed root vegetables, you could make cauliflower cheese or put stewed fruit with custard.

Ideally you should try to eat more starchy vegetables and not just fruit as sweet fruits do, of course, contain large amounts of sugar. Although potatoes are a root vegetable they need to be included in the starchy foods group, not this one.

In general a portion of vegetables (fresh, canned or frozen) is 3 heaped tablespoons; fruit portions are 2 small fruits (plums), 1 medium sized (an orange), or a slice of large (melon) Salad vegetables such as lettuce and cucumber need to be eaten in larger amounts as they are mainly water.

Note: Although fibre is such an important part of a healthy diet, it's not represented as a separate food group because it's present in good amounts in fruit, vegetables and starchy carbohydrates (particularly unprocessed).

Fibre in both soluble and insoluble forms is vital to the health of our bodies; it helps to regulate blood sugar levels, and works as a kind of cleanser for our system as it provides bulk which we don't digest but which helps food to be pushed through our intestines. If people who are suffering from constipation are able to increase the amount of fibre they eat this will often be better for them than taking medication or using food supplements.

Starchy Foods

Starchy foods are the foundation of diet; depending on your culture, place of birth or preference your staple could be wheat, used to make bread and pasta; rice, or potatoes. Other starchy carbohydrate sources include pulses and cereals.

At least 50 per cent of your diet should be unprocessed starchy carbohydrates; vegetables will make a significant contribution towards this; you don't want a plate half full of potatoes. The less processed a starchy food is, the more fibre and nutrients it will contain with fewer added fats and sugars. This means that, ideally, you should have whole-wheat pasta and bread, brown rice, wholegrain cereals and potatoes in their skins.

Starch is found in varying amounts in most foods; sugars are also carbohydrates and these too are present in the majority of things we eat. Root vegetables have high levels of starch but, as they age, these turn to sugars; fruits are high in sugar but as they get older this converts to starch.

Meat, Fish, Eggs and Beans

These are all good sources of protein which is vital for body growth and repair; however, it only needs to make up 15% of our daily diet.

Vegetarians should be eating a variety of eggs, dairy products, pulses, nuts and grains to meet their nutritional needs.

Non-vegetarians could reduce the fat in their diet by eating fish at least twice a week; eating less red meat; choosing lean white meat and poultry with the skin removed and trying vegetarian options.

Protein sources such as these and dairy products (see below) all include fats. Saturated and unsaturated fats occur in varying amounts in all fat containing foods. Saturated fat is a major ingredient of red meat, dairy products and many processed foods; unsaturated fat is present in significant amounts in oily fish, avocados, olive oil and vegetable oils.

Fats are an essential part of a healthy diet as they carry vitamins A, D, E and K and are the source of other essential nutrients. To improve your diet you may need to raise your intake of unsaturated fats and reduce the amount of saturated fats you eat, as these are associated with increased cholesterol which causes heart disease, blocked arteries and other serious health conditions.

Milk and Dairy Products

These are also good protein sources and provide calcium for healthy bones. Unless you are trying to gain weight you should have skimmed or semi-skimmed milk to limit your intake of saturated fat.

Fat and sugar containing foods

While no foods are evil in themselves, these are the foods which may be the most harmful to health. As we have seen naturally occurring fats and sugar are essential to a varied, healthy diet. However, processed foods containing large amounts of added fat and sugar have little or no nutritional value, contain more calories per gram than more filling starchy carbohydrates and often include artificial ingredients which can be harmful to health.

For example, the process of solidifying oils to create spreads that are low in saturated fat results in trans fatty acids which may be the most harmful form of fat there is.

Foods in this category include cakes, biscuits, chocolate bars, sweets, caramelized nuts, and children's cereals.

Note: It's important that you read food labels so that you know what is in the food you are eating and so you do not get taken in by advertised claims.

For example, many products which advertise themselves as 'low fat' contain large amounts of added sugar.

Spreads marketed as healthy alternatives to butter can have artificially created fats which may have a more serious negative effect on health.

A toffee apple marked '1 of your 5 a day' is still not a healthy snack.

Drinking Instruction

Eating well helps us to maintain our health but drinking enough keeps us alive. Malnutrition takes time, dehydration can occur over a matter of hours with potentially fatal results.

The only essential fluid is water which we can get from the foods we eat or the drinks we have and which, in its natural form, has no nutritional benefit whatsoever. Water contains no calories, fat or sugar, but neither does it contain more than traces of vitamins or minerals

Most people should drink around 1.2 litres of fluid a day; that's about 8 glasses; the following fluids have added benefits:

- Milk – good source of calcium
- Fruit juices and smoothies – see above
- Tea or coffee – in moderation as they contain antioxidants but caffeine may be harmful in large amounts
- Alcoholic beverages – see below

Drinks to avoid include fizzy drinks and squashes as they have no nutritional value and may be full of sugar and additives.

Alcohol Instruction

Official sources advise that a moderate amount of alcohol can be good for us, but drinking any more than the recommended amounts increases the risk of various health problems. Both binge drinking (more than 6 units in a session for women or 8 units for men) and longer term excessive alcohol intake are dangerous.

Men should drink no more than 21 units a week while women should limit themselves to 14; everyone should have a couple of alcohol free days a week and limit the amount they drink each day to 2 / 3 units for women or 3 / 4 for men.

The size of a unit of alcohol varies but in general terms it's half a pint of normal strength lager, a small glass (125 mls) of wine or a measure (25 mls) of spirits. Watch out for pubs and restaurants using larger measures; some wine glasses can be almost 3 times the standard size.

Summary

If we want to improve our diet we should try to eat more unprocessed foods, a greater variety of fruit and vegetables and far fewer sugary, fatty snacks. A typical plate should have a generous amount of vegetables, a good handful of pasta, potatoes or rice and a small serving of protein. Additions such as butter and oil should be used sparingly unless you need to gain weight.

Chapter Three

Client Freedom of Choice

To safeguard your clients' health you should be supporting them to make 'good' lifestyle choices and helping them to access advice and information.

Outcome 1 of the Care Quality Commission's essential standards of quality and safety requires that 'people who use services must be given relevant information to encourage them to change lifestyle behaviours that are placing their health at risk, so they can make an informed choice about whether they wish to lead a healthier life.'

The Mental Capacity Act 2005

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 was designed to protect the rights of potentially vulnerable adults who might otherwise be prevented from making their own choices and decisions.

The Act is based on five key principles which together ensure that individuals are respected as competent adults; given every opportunity to make their own decisions and choices; treated fairly without prejudice or discrimination and supported to be as independent as possible.

The statutory principles

1. A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that he lacks capacity
2. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help him to do so have been taken without success
3. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because he makes an unwise decision
4. An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in his best interests
5. Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action

(Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice)

When you are working you must comply with the Mental Capacity Act and CQC guidance, therefore, it is up to your individual clients to decide whether to make changes or not. Even if you have to make decisions on a client's behalf you must base your decisions on your knowledge of their personal values, beliefs etc.

The following would be unacceptable care practices even if you believed you were acting in the client's best interests:

- Treating clients with diabetes differently at mealtimes e.g. giving them no menu choices and refusing to serve them desserts that were available to other clients
- Refusing to allow a client to smoke
- Forcing a client to exercise

If you feel that individuals could benefit from changes in their lifestyle and behaviours you must find appropriate ways to encourage and support them. Your methods need to be gently persuasive without restricting people's rights and freedoms or overstepping the professional boundaries of your relationship.

Here are some examples of good and bad practice:

Good Practice:

- Make sure you are acting in the individual's best interests
- Use a person-centred approach based on fairness, respect and partnership
- Respect the individual's cultural and religious identity
- Identify benefits that mean something to the individual
- Educate, inform and empower

Bad Practice:

- Taking actions which restrict the individual's freedoms or rights
- Making assumptions about individual's knowledge or motivations
- Dismissing any fears or anxiety related to change
- Putting pressure on individuals to follow your values and beliefs

NOTE: What do you think some of the barriers are that you may encounter when supporting clients to make better dietary choices? (Make a note!)

Use your note pad to write down some of the barriers you may encounter when supporting clients to make better dietary choices

Preparing and encouraging healthy food

Catering staff should work closely with clients to ensure that they are providing food which takes into account individual needs. They should:

- Spend time talking to clients
- Create client feedback surveys and use the results to plan menus
- Discreetly observe clients eating
- Know and understand different cultural and religious practices, special diets and allergies
- Know when adjustments will need to be made for illness or medications e.g. if a client has taken insulin they must eat within a certain time frame; if they are on statins they must not have grapefruit
- Understand the way in which different preparation methods affect nutrition e.g. pureeing food affects its fibre content

Think about the following problems and test your current understanding by thinking of ways of overcoming them?

- Clients rarely eat fruit

- Vegetables are unpopular
- Clients say that healthy options are ‘boring and tasteless’
- Vegetarian clients complain that they’re bored of eating the same things all the time
- Fried breakfasts are very popular
- Most clients add salt to their food before they taste it
- Many clients enjoy sugary, fatty desserts

As with all other areas of care, a person-centred approach is best for ensuring that clients are being supported in a way which suits them. By being proactive in seeking client feedback caterers can identify ways in which menus and mealtimes can be improved for all. It may be necessary to overcome objections from staff and clients who do not like change.

For example, a survey of clients may show that most would prefer a hot meal in the evening but current practice means that a hot lunch is served with a light tea available at 5ish. In the interests of the majority it may be necessary to rearrange working hours and alter staff hours to adapt to this change. This could be tried on a temporary basis to allow people to voice their concerns and to see if client satisfaction improved overall.

Carers and caterers should be flexible to meet diverse communication needs; the following suggestions may help to influence people in a positive way:

- Enable clients to make food choices at a time, and in a way, that is suitable for them
- Use interesting descriptions to make healthy meals sound appetizing – words like fresh, homemade and aromatic make everyday foods seem more appealing
- Use pictures of food so that clients can see what they are choosing
- Allow clients to see, smell and taste foods before choosing
- Involve clients in menu planning and food preparation

Go and have a look at the menu on offer in your workplace today then answer the following questions:

- Is there a range of options for vegetarians as well as meat eaters?
- Could all of your clients find something appropriate to eat at each meal?
- Are there at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables available?
- Do all or most options involve 1 or more portions of fruit and vegetables?
- Does each meal option include a starchy carbohydrate?
- Are there many foods high in sugar and fat?

Evaluation and Monitoring

It is not enough just to provide adequate amounts of foods and fluids; you must also ensure that clients are eating and drinking them. Your employer should have in place policies and procedures for monitoring nutrition and hydration and these should identify action to be taken for clients who are having difficulties.

You should take personal responsibility for observing clients and spotting unidentified needs. For example; if a client’s, meal or drink has been left untouched find out why. If it’s because

they couldn't physically lift a cup or cutlery they should be given appropriate equipment or help; if it's because they didn't want it we need to know if they have lost their appetite, are ill or just didn't like what they were given.

Failure to monitor may lead to dehydration or malnutrition; this would be a safeguarding issue as the client's needs have been neglected.

Eating environment

A dining room should be a pleasant and inviting place that clients want to spend time in and where they can socialize with each other. Clients who prefer to eat alone should be supported to enjoy meals in their room with suitable arrangements made to ensure that they are positioned correctly and have everything they need.

Lighting in the dining room should be bright but not institutional; fresh flowers, bowls of fruit etc. can be used to 'set the scene'. Table arrangements should encourage interaction between clients with enough staff support to ensure that clients who need help get it. Dinner is not a task to be done quickly and efficiently, clients must not feel rushed or pressured but should feel relaxed and able to enjoy their food at a pace that suits them.

Caring clients while eating

All clients should eat as independently as possible; this may require special equipment and you may need to consult an occupational therapist for advice. It is always important to treat clients with dignity and respect, equipment should be age appropriate and if clients need help to eat they must not be fed like babies but should be supported as competent adults.

If clients need help to eat the following information may help:

Arrangements

- Make sure the client is fully awake and ready to eat – mouth is clean , dentures are in
- Make sure the food is attractive, appetizing and a suitable temperature – ask yourself 'would I eat this?'; if the answer is no don't expect your client to eat it either
- Make sure that the client is comfortable and relaxed, support them in an upright position using pillows if necessary
- Sit by the client, where they can see you – make allowances for any visual problems, if they have a blind side don't sit on it

Taking Food

- Give the client as much time as they need, rushing will increase the risk of choking and make the meal an unpleasant experience
- If foods need to be warm and the client takes a long time consider having food 'little and often' instead of three times a day
- Make sure that the client is able to do as much as possible for themselves e.g. taking the fork or spoon from you when you have put the food on it

- Describe the food as you offer it so that the client knows what to expect with each mouthful
- Offer a small amount at a time (it may be best to use a teaspoon) and ensure that the client has finished one mouthful before offering another
- Maintain the client's dignity throughout; talk to them (but discourage them from talking and eating at the same time), help them to keep clean and tidy (but don't treat them like a baby, no bibs) and allow them to take the lead about what they are eating and when

Steps after taking food

- Offer fluids to rinse their mouth out and encourage them to remain upright for half an hour to aid digestion

Chapter Four

Hygienic food

The food you serve to your clients should be both nutritious and safe; to ensure this you should know where it has come from; take care of it while it's stored; and prepare it carefully.

When you are providing food for other people there are two main pieces of legislation which you must comply with:

- The Food Safety Act 1990
- The Food Hygiene Regulations 2006

The Act covers all areas of food production at every stage from growing / breeding to packaging, displaying, preparing, cooking and serving. Anyone working with food has a duty to comply with this legislation and the penalties for not doing so can include a fine of up to £20,000 and possibly a jail sentence as well. Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) employed by the local authority have powers of inspection and enforcement.

The regulations set out hygiene and safety principles that must be complied with. If you are involved in the preparation or serving of food you should have been given appropriate training; you will need to be aware of your employer's policies, procedures and safe working practices and know the principles of food hygiene and safety.

Instructions to buy food

The person with responsibility for catering has a legal duty to ensure that they are buying their food from reputable sources. They should check things like the cleanliness of vehicles used for delivery and the state of packaging when food arrives.

If delivered food packaging is damaged the goods should be rejected; if food has started to defrost it should be disposed of.

When staff members shop at the supermarket they should make sure that they choose foods that are well within date marks; bag similar foods together (i.e. raw meats in one, chilled foods in another etc.); and return straight to the workplace to put the food away as quickly as possible.

An efficient kitchen manager will make good use of seasonal foods to reduce costs, introduce variety and ensure maximum nutritional value. Buying foods from local producers can be a good way of ensuring that they know what they are getting, and, if they can develop a working relationship with local suppliers, they may be able to take advantage of special deals.

Preserving food

- Rotate stock (first in - first out) to reduce waste
- Keep fruit and vegetables (apart from bananas and potatoes) in the fridge
- Chilled and frozen food must be stored in the fridge or freezer as quickly as possible after delivery
- Raw foods must be kept below cooked foods
- All foods should be covered or wrapped to prevent cross contamination
- Fridges and freezers must be clean and temperature checks should be carried out regularly
- All chilled foods should be checked daily for expired date marks or signs of spoilage.
- Dry goods and tins should be stored in a cool, dry cupboard or room, on shelves or in robust, pest proof containers
- Stores should be kept clean and tidy and checked on a weekly basis.

Bacteria control

Bacteria are the main cause of food poisoning; people who are elderly or already ill are particularly vulnerable.

To breed successfully bacteria like:

- warm environments
- moisture
- food
- time

To get around bacteria have to be carried; hands are the most likely vehicle for cross contamination but it can happen whenever foods come into contact; when foods are placed on unclean surfaces; when an item (utensil, cloth etc) touches one food then another; and if foods drip onto others.

Bacteria growth and movement can be controlled by:

Refrigeration / freezing – keeping food under 5°C restricts breeding opportunities but the bacteria will become active again as soon as the temperature of the environment goes up. Cold temperatures do not kill bacteria.

Cooking – bacteria will die at hot temperatures. The hotter the food gets, the more bacteria will be killed. When you are cooking fresh foods a temperature of around 75°C is generally sufficient, if you are reheating foods a temperature of around 82°C is required.

Use Acid / alkaline cleaning materials – bacteria like a pH neutral environment; substances like vinegar, lemon juice and baking soda limit multiplication and will even kill some bacteria

Wash hands regularly - have a separate, easily accessible, sink for hand washing **Store**

foods properly - keep raw and cooked foods separate (raw below cooked)

Clean thoroughly and regularly – have a cleaning rota and clean as you go

Control rubbish - keep rubbish in sealed bins and empty them regularly

Control pests – store foods off the ground, look out for warning signs such as droppings or chewed packaging

Aware of Allergies

Allergic reactions can cause significant harm and may be fatal, it is, therefore, important for you to be aware of any allergies your clients may have and to treat foods in such a way that allergens are not spread from one food to another.

To protect individuals with allergies you must:

- Be aware of clients' allergies, their causes, symptoms and treatment
- Keep foods separate
- Retain food labels and know what's in prepared foods
- Use separate utensils for different foods