

CLINICAL TIP OF THE MONTH: Altering Medications

Feeding tubes and swallowing difficulties often result in the need to alter solid medications for our patients. Before reaching for the pill crusher—make sure that the dosage forms are not sustained release, enteric-coated, sublingual, or buccal medications. Altering these types of medications may adversely change their effect and safety. Another consideration is the safety of the employees handling the medications. Certain meds can be

potentially hazardous; carcinogenic, or teratogenic (harmful to the development of an unborn fetus) and may be coated to reduce exposure of the hazardous chemicals by those who handle the medication. If you have a patient who has issues swallowing or a feeding tube and are unsure of how to proceed, contact your pharmacy for information about dosage form alternatives and which meds can be manipulated!

EXERCISE FOR SENIORS

My grandfather lived until the age of 93. He was always special to me and I credit him for introducing me to the world of exercise and the benefits of frequent activity. He was a Marine and a WWII Vet. At the age of 5 we had push-up, sit-up and running competitions. He was ecstatic when I completed my first marathon. My grandpa taught my daughter how to do a cartwheel when he was age 85. He exercised most of his life and because of this had great mobility, muscle strength and cardiovascular health. His level of health and wellness is a wonderful example of the benefits of regular exercise as we go through our golden years.

There are four essential elements to a successful exercise program for individuals in their senior years. These are **cardio, strength, flexibility and balance**.

Cardio exercise uses large muscle groups in rhythmic motions over a period of time. This type of exercise increases your body's ability to deliver oxygen and nutrients to tissues and to remove waste over sustained periods of time. Cardio workouts get your heart pumping and you should also feel a little sweaty and breathless. Cardio exercise helps lessen fatigue and shortness of breath. Cardio includes walking, stair climbing, swimming, hiking, cycling, rowing, tennis, and dancing. Your daily activities like cleaning and shopping will become much easier as you increase your cardiovascular strength.

Strength training involves repetitive motion using weight or external resistance from body weight, machines, or elastic bands. This helps prevent loss of bone mass, builds muscle, and improves balance. These elements are important in staying active and preventing risk of falling.

Flexibility helps with range of motion. This can be accomplished through static stretches (stationary), and ballistic stretches (moving or bouncing) to keep muscles and joints supple so they are less prone to injury.

Balance is the final building block of fitness. This maintains standing and stability under a variety of conditions including static (stationary) and dynamic (moving) balance. This improves balance, posture, and stability while walking.

With the proper guidance a 30 minute routine incorporating these four elements will greatly increase overall health and sense of wellness. Please contact Aimee at MedSave if you are interested in a safe and effective exercise program customized for seniors.

- Amy Dubray, Certified Wellness Coach, Certified Personal Trainer

NUTRITION TIP

Yes, Breakfast IS the most important meal of the day! However, some people seem to get into a “rut” with the same breakfast, and often they are lacking vital nutrients. An example is the “tea and toast diet”, where people tend to sip on tea and simply have a slice of white-bread toast. Children, older adults, and adults with a variety of mental illnesses or special needs, tend to have a better appetite in the morning. This means that we should focus on a nutrition-packed breakfast to get their day started right.

1. Build on a healthy cereal. Top a high-fiber cereal with a sprinkle of granola, bananas, and low-fat milk or plain yogurt. This combination provides good fiber and protein intake, plus calcium and potassium.

2. Get off to a berry good start. Another possibility for breakfast is berries and low-fat Greek-style yogurt with a drizzle of honey and a sprinkle of toasted sliced almonds. These foods are high in protein and volume, which can help you feel full longer.

3. Take your nutrition to go. Smoothies are another smart choice when made with Greek-style low-fat yogurt, berries, and a touch of sugar. It’s a meal that’s high in protein, dairy, and volume, and it’s very portable if you’re in a hurry.

4. Get a good “warm-up.” Hot oatmeal with honey, raisins, apples, or anything crunchy is a great winter treat.

5. Don’t skip the eggs. Hot breakfasts extend the range of possibilities. Scrambled eggs - one whole egg and one egg white - along with a piece of whole-wheat toast, lightly buttered, and some fruit on the side are high in protein and volume and make a great combination.

6. Wrap up some burritos. Breakfast burritos can spice up your morning meal. Use the same scrambled egg recipe as in No. 5 as the filling for a low-carb, whole-wheat (for extra fiber) wrap along with some salsa, low-fat sour cream, and a sprinkle of cheese.

7. Call on cottage cheese. Cottage cheese along with fruit or nuts can be a good breakfast choice that’s high in protein plus some calcium. Look for cottage cheese brands that offer extra fiber.

8. Ham it up. Even ham and eggs can be healthy when using one whole egg and one egg white in the scramble and two slices of lean Canadian bacon. Add half a grapefruit on the side and it’s a meal full of protein, fiber, and vitamin C.

9. Don’t rule out a.m. vegetables. You can enjoy veggies with breakfast if you add them to some eggs. Dr. Roberts suggests cooking one and a half cups of sliced button mushrooms or one cup of lightly steamed vegetables (like broccoli or spinach), two beaten eggs, salt, and freshly ground pepper in a non-stick pan with one-half teaspoon of tub margarine. Add a dollop of ketchup, if desired.

10. Think whole grain. Whole-grain English muffins with peanut butter or another nut butter and sliced fruit like apples or pears, along with a glass of milk, can be filling while providing protein and calcium. (Thank you to Kristen Stewart and *Everyday Health* for the list.)

NOVEMBER 2010

• Happy Thanksgiving!

We’ll be closed Thursday, Nov. 25th

• Attention! On Dec. 1st we will be undergoing a software change. You may notice a different look to your labels and statements.