

Supporting Personal Care and Feeding

Caredemy

Online Training Academy



Course Name:

Supporting Personal Care and Feeding

Course Description:

This course will give learners an overview of the use of supporting personal hygiene in a care setting, including bathing, showering, helping someone wash in bed, and assessing for issues relating to personal hygiene.

Course Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course, the learner will be able to:

- Describe how to safely support a person in bathing in a full shower, bath, or in bed
- List ways to respect dignity of others when supporting personal hygiene
- Identify concerning personal hygiene and skin-related issues, such as pressure sores and skin damage

Course Requirements:

Participants must complete all learning modules and pass the multiple-choice course assessment.



Importance of Personal Hygiene

Maintaining personal cleanliness, whether for yourself or a loved one, remains of paramount importance. Inadequate hygiene may result in discomfort, skin issues, infections, and a diminished sense of self-worth. Because these are private tasks, people may not want help. It can be awkward to get undressed in front of carers, and they might also get frustrated about not being able to take care of themselves.

Helping individuals with their basic hygiene not only fosters a personal bond between health and social care providers and people but is also crucial for maintaining their well-being. It falls on the health or social care professional to strike the right balance in grooming, as both excessive and insufficient attention can lead to adverse outcomes. Considering the diverse care environments and individual needs, it's essential to assess on a case-by-case basis the level of assistance each person requires. People should be encouraged to contribute to their hygiene to the best of their capabilities, with assistance being on hand for tasks like toileting, shaving, hair care, dental hygiene, and bathing.

Issues of Concern

Ensuring effective contamination control between care providers and individuals is paramount. Here's a breakdown of essential practices to uphold hygiene and communication in care settings:

Hand Disinfection: Prior to any contact, care providers should consistently disinfect their hands. Gloves may be necessary for specific procedures, adding an extra layer of protection.

Open Communication: Establishing a transparent and robust line of communication between care providers and individuals is crucial. Discussing hygiene needs, even potentially uncomfortable topics, can foster comfort and provide care providers with a comprehensive understanding of care requirements.

Balanced Hygiene Assistance: Striking a balance in assisting patients with their hygiene is essential. Tailoring the frequency of support to maintain optimal hygiene can enhance the patient's overall well-being.



Attitude Impact: A caregiver's attitude towards a person's capabilities can significantly influence their hygiene behavior. Being mindful of a person's limitations while maintaining an optimistic view of their self-sufficiency in hygiene can greatly benefit the person's overall care.

Adverse Effects of Poor Hygiene

Neglecting hygiene can lead to a host of complications, including hospital-acquired infections. Maintaining an appropriate level of hygiene is vital. For instance, regular hair care can boost a patient's self-esteem, but excessive brushing may contribute to conditions like acne near the hairline.

By integrating good practices into care routines, we can ensure the well-being of individuals and minimize the risk of contamination, ultimately enhancing the quality of care provided.

Bathing and Showering

You can support those you care for by encouraging their independence and allowing them to proceed at their own pace. Additionally, consider these steps:

- **Ensure the Bathroom's Comfort:** Prior to their bath or shower, make sure the bathroom is comfortably warm.
- **Confirm Water Temperature:** Check that the bath or shower water is at a temperature that suits them.
- **Prepare Essentials:** Ensure they have all the necessary items within easy reach, including towels, clean clothing, toiletries, washcloths, shaving equipment, and disposable wipes and pads if they use them.
- **Enhance Safety:** Place a non-slip mat in the bathtub or shower to reduce the risk of slips and falls.
- **Stay Nearby:** Stay within earshot in case they require assistance or support.

If the individual in your care is undergoing radiotherapy, chemotherapy, or has a skin condition, it's advisable to consult their medical provider before introducing any new products for their skin care. This extra step can help ensure their safety and well-being during their treatment.



Steps Before Bathing

Before starting a bath or shower:

- Get the soap, washcloth, towels, and shampoo ready
- Ensure the bathroom is warm and well lit.
- Play soft music if it helps to relax the person
- Be matter of fact about bathing. Say, "It's time for a bath now." Don't argue about the need for a bath or shower.
- Tell the person what you are going to do, step by step. Be gentle and respectful.
- Make sure the water temperature is comfortable.
- Don't use bath oil. It can make the tub slippery and may cause urinary tract infections.

Washing in Bed

If a person requires assistance with bed baths, it's important to approach this task with care and consideration. Taking the time to ensure their comfort is paramount. Here are some steps to prepare and execute a bed bath effectively:

Comfort and Preparation: Before starting the bed bath, ensure the person is comfortable and at ease. Prepare for the bath by gathering essential items and checking the room's temperature. Remove any potential obstructions and secure privacy by closing the door and drawing the blinds or curtains. Place a bowl of warm water on a flat surface within easy reach.

Gather the Necessities: Assemble all the items you're likely to require, including:

- A bowl filled with warm water
- Clean, warm towels for drying, placing beneath, and covering
- Soap, moisturizer, and any other toiletries they use
- Two clean washcloths, one for the upper body and face, and another for the lower body
- Any personal hygiene products they use, such as disposable pads and wipes
- Shaving equipment
- Fresh clothing, like underwear and pajamas
- Clean bedding if sheet changes are needed



Communication and Comfort: Engage in a conversation with the person to inform them of the process and steps involved. Ensure your hands are comfortably warm before touching them and maintain a dialogue throughout the bath. Continuously check for their comfort and handle them with gentleness.

Undressing with Dignity: Assist the person in undressing, being mindful to cover parts of the body not being washed with towels or bedding to keep them warm and maintain their dignity.

Gentle Drying: Pay special attention to thoroughly drying their skin after washing, especially if their skin is fragile or sensitive. Gently pat the skin dry to prevent any discomfort.

Washing Different Body Areas

Face and Hands: The person may be capable of washing their own face and hands, but if needed, you can assist. When cleaning the face, it's best to use warm water or a very gentle soap, as some soaps can be drying for the skin.

Shaving: If they wish to shave, they might be able to do so independently while sitting up. However, you may need to provide assistance. Cover their chest and shoulders with a towel. If an electric razor is in use, press it firmly against the skin using circular motions. For manual razors, keep the skin taut and shave in short downward strokes, from the cheeks to the neck.

Upper Body: Be gentle and follow these steps:

- Start with the upper body by using the washcloth, beginning at the neck and shoulders, and gradually wash down to the waist.
- If they can sit up, ask them to bend forward to allow you to wash and dry their back. If they cannot sit up, gently assist them in turning onto their side for back washing.
- After washing and drying the upper body, help them put on fresh clothing if necessary.
- You can also apply moisturizing cream to areas like the elbows if needed.



Lower Body: Be gentle and adhere to these steps:

- Change the water in the bowl before starting.
- With the second washcloth, wash and dry their legs and feet one at a time. Place a towel under the leg being washed to prevent the bed from getting wet.
- The person might prefer privacy to wash their bottom and between their legs. Arrange towels and bedding to ensure their privacy. If they can't manage this themselves, assist them in rolling onto their side to clean these areas, being thorough in rinsing off all soap.
- Ensure thorough drying, especially in sensitive areas and skin folds. Subsequently, assist them in donning fresh clothing and applying moisturizing cream to dry areas, such as the feet.

Mouth Care

Caring for the oral health of someone can be done with care and patience. Consider the following tips:

- **Guided Brushing:** Show the person how to brush their teeth step by step, allowing them to do as much as they can independently.
- **Lead by Example:** Brush your own teeth alongside them to encourage and normalize the activity.
- **Denture Care:** Assist in cleaning dentures regularly to maintain oral hygiene.
- **Rinsing Routine:** Encourage the person to rinse their mouth with water after each meal and incorporate mouthwash into their daily routine.
- **Specialized Tools:** If necessary, use a long-handled, angled, or electric toothbrush to make brushing more manageable.
- **Dental Check-ups:** Support regular visits to a dentist, if needed



Ensuring Safety

When caring for an individual with limited mobility or balance issues, consider the following safety measures:

- **Non-Slip Environment:** Ensure the floor is not slippery and, if necessary, dry it to prevent accidents.
- **Comfortable Room Temperature:** Maintain a comfortable room temperature, as older individuals are more sensitive to cold. Adjust the environment accordingly.
- **Warm Water:** Use comfortably warm water, bearing in mind the preference for warmth, especially among older people.
- **Privacy and Emergency Access:** Remove locks from the door to balance privacy needs with the necessity of emergency access for both you and the person under your care.

Remember to safeguard your own safety when caring for someone, seeking advice on techniques and assistance when helping them in and out of situations such as bathing. Prioritizing safety is essential for both caregivers and care recipients. Consider taking a course on proper moving and handling, if needed.

Continence Services

Up to 1 in 3 individuals may experience difficulties in controlling their urinary flow. Even if someone doesn't face challenges with bowel or bladder control, mobility issues can hinder their ability to reach the toilet promptly. Incontinence concerns can lead to skin irritation, infections, as well as feelings of embarrassment and diminished self-confidence. The person's medical provider is a valuable resource for guidance on available services. They can offer support, counsel, and information, and may also make referrals to specialists such as continence advisers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and dietitians.

A continence adviser might be able to supply a range of useful items to aid with continence issues, including:

- Plastic or PVC covers to safeguard beds.
- Disposable or washable continence pads.
- Waterproof pants



Small aids and home adaptations may be used, which may include:

- Handrails.
- Commodes.
- Raised toilet seats

Haircare

Haircare is a crucial aspect of personal hygiene, and while daily hair washing is not necessary, regular brushing is essential to maintain hair health, boost self-esteem, and prevent tangles. Here's a streamlined process for washing and caring for a person's hair:

1. Sanitize your hands and use disposable gloves before starting.
2. Warm water to around 115°F and verify the temperature's comfort with your elbow.
3. Prepare a bed setup: place a towel under the shoulder blades and a waterproof bed protector under the head, securing its edges to prevent spills.
4. Wrap a towel around the person's neck and position a water basin under their head to catch excess water.
5. Dampen a washcloth and place it over the person's eyes.
6. Check your facility's procedures for any specific requirements like cotton balls in the person's ears.
7. Gently pour warm water over the person's hair, then apply shampoo, massaging it into the scalp.
8. Thoroughly rinse out the shampoo, repeating as necessary.
9. Apply conditioner if needed, then rinse.
10. Remove all washing equipment, place a dry towel under the person's head, and return the pillow.
11. Dry the person's hair by gently rubbing with a dry towel.
12. Assist in brushing and styling their hair.



Nail Care

Caring for nails not only enhances a person's appearance but also prevents inadvertent self-inflicted injuries. Regular nail maintenance helps eliminate harmful bacteria hiding beneath the nails, reducing the risk of infections. When tending to a person's nails, keep a watchful eye for any irregularities such as swelling, nail texture changes, discoloration, tenderness, or foot ulcers, and promptly report them. Vigilance is essential for individuals with diabetes.

Nail Care Steps:

1. Wash your hands before commencing nail care.
2. Nail care can follow a bath or soaking the nails in warm soapy water for 10 minutes.
3. After soaking, place your hands on a towel. Employ an orange stick to gently remove dirt from beneath the nails. Clean the stick with a paper towel before moving to the next nail.
4. Once the nails are clean, use nail clippers to trim them if necessary. Trim the nails straight and close to the nailbed, leaving a small margin to prevent accidental cuts.
5. If the nail edges are rough, smooth them with a file.
6. Apply lotion to the person's hands.
7. Repeat the same procedure for the person's feet. For those with diabetes, foot hygiene is crucial. When trimming toenails, ensure proper lighting and take extra care to cut them straight to prevent injury.

Identifying Pressure Sores and Skin Damage

Extended periods in the same position can lead to discomfort and numbness in the weight-bearing areas of the body, potentially causing skin breakdown and the development of pressure ulcers, commonly known as bed sores. An opportune time to inspect the person's skin is during their bathing routine. Look for these potential signs of pressure ulcers:

Discolored Skin Patches: These patches may not return to their normal color when pressed. In individuals with lighter skin tones, you might notice red patches, while those with darker skin tones may exhibit purple, blue, or patches that differ in color from the surrounding area, typically appearing darker.



Altered Skin Sensation: The affected skin area may feel warmer or cooler, harder or softer than the surrounding skin.

Swelling, Pain, or Itchiness: These sensations in the affected area can be indicative of skin distress.

In the presence of these signs, refrain from rubbing the area. It's essential to promptly inform their medical provider, as these signs may indicate the presence of pressure sores, even if the skin has not yet broken. To alleviate pressure and enhance comfort, ensure the person changes their position regularly. This practice can significantly help in preventing pressure ulcers.

Addressing Resistance to Bathing

Encountering resistance from individuals when it comes to maintaining personal hygiene is not uncommon. There are various reasons why this may occur, including:

- memory loss
- depression
- physical limitations
- fear of falling
- sensory impairments such as loss of smell or eyesight

It's understandable that some individuals may feel embarrassed or frustrated when they struggle to perform tasks they once did effortlessly. Many also fear losing their independence and autonomy as they age, especially if they've witnessed others struggle with similar issues.

For those with conditions like Alzheimer's disease, the resistance to bathing can be particularly challenging. However, there are strategies that can be employed to address these concerns and provide support. By understanding the underlying reasons for their resistance and implementing appropriate approaches, caregivers can help seniors maintain their personal hygiene and overall well-being.



Feeding and Hydration

Some individuals may require support with their meals, and caregivers play a vital role in ensuring they receive proper nutrition and hydration. It's crucial to establish a routine and approach feeding them with sensitivity to their emotions and preferences.

Managing Feeding Tubes: For individuals with feeding tubes, the responsibility of care typically falls on a registered nurse, care manager, or medical doctor. Caregivers should adhere to the instructions outlined in the Care Plan when assisting with tasks such as maintaining prescribed liquids in the feeding tube and cleaning and draining it as needed.

Promoting Hydration: Hydration is essential for overall health, and caregivers should encourage individuals to drink an adequate amount of water daily. It's important to note that some individuals with incontinence issues may be hesitant to consume liquids. Establishing a regular eating and drinking schedule helps individuals regulate their body's functions and plan fluid intake around activities and outings, reducing the likelihood of embarrassing situations.

Recognizing Signs of Dehydration: It's crucial to be vigilant for signs of dehydration in seniors, such as urinary tract infections, confusion, lethargy, and dry skin. Remember, while a portion of the body's fluids comes from food, the majority should be obtained from beverages to maintain proper hydration levels.

Supporting Ambulation

Understanding and addressing the needs of individuals with mobility challenges and toileting assistance is crucial for their well-being and dignity. Here are some considerations and strategies to ensure their safety and comfort:

- Always be aware of the person's walking limitations and stay close to them during walking activities.
- If necessary, provide support with a cane or walker, using the guard method to maintain arm support near their waist or under their arm and shoulder.
- Be mindful of balance issues that can arise due to changes in the inner ear canal or as a natural part of the aging process in elderly people. Stay nearby to prevent falls.



Exercise

Incorporate physical exercise into the individual's routine, such as walking, leg lifts, arm lifts, or dancing, to maintain muscle mass and joint mobility.

Ensure that an appropriate exercise routine is included in the person's care plan and consider resources like the National Institute of Health's booklet on senior exercises for elderly clients.

Remember the mantra: "If you don't use it, you lose it!"

Transfers from Chair, Toilet, Bed

Perform safe transfers based on the size and capabilities of the individual. Use techniques like the guard method during walking, utilize gait belts for transfers between bed and chair/toilet, and employ proper positioning for comfortable transfers from bed to edge-of-bed or wheelchair/toilet.

Positioning: Respect the individual's preferences for comfortable sitting or sleeping positions, whether in a bed or reclining chair. Reposition the person every 2 hours, especially if bedridden or experiencing memory loss.

Toileting

To support toileting, you should:

- Respectfully assist with toileting needs, considering factors such as age-related changes, diseases, medications, and physical capabilities.
- Discuss and implement appropriate toileting assistance, including catheter care and incontinence care, following medical instructions, and considering the use of adult diapers or pee-proof underwear for discreet protection.
- Encourage regular bathroom breaks, every 2 hours if necessary, and explore bedtime solutions such as special bed sheets or pads for added comfort and convenience.

By understanding and addressing these aspects of care with sensitivity and respect, caregivers can significantly improve the quality of life for persons with mobility and toileting challenges.



Addressing Constipation

Constipation can be a common issue for many, often exacerbated by inactivity and certain medications. However, there are various remedies available, both natural and medicinal, to alleviate this discomfort. Here are some strategies to discuss with clients and their medical providers:

Constipation Relief:

- Stool softeners and laxatives can help alleviate constipation. It's important to discuss these options with the medical doctor to determine the most suitable approach.
- Encourage the consumption of high-fiber foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and prune juice to promote regular bowel movements.
- Increase water intake by drinking a full glass of water upon waking and throughout the day. Staying hydrated is crucial for maintaining healthy digestion.
- Avoid constipating foods like cheese, rice, and bananas, which can exacerbate the issue.
- Regular exercise is beneficial for overall health and can also help stimulate bowel movements.

Review the potential side effects of medications with the person's medical provider, as certain medications can contribute to constipation. If necessary, adjustments can be made to the medication regimen.

Medication Management

The following are tips to follow for medication management:

- Ensure that a medication schedule is included in the person's care plan and adhere to it diligently. Remind individuals to take their medications as prescribed.
- Be vigilant in monitoring any changes in appetite, sleep patterns, or mood that may result from medication use.
- Understand the difference between prescription drugs, which are prescribed by a medical doctor, and over-the-counter drugs, which can be purchased without a prescription.



- Obtain permission from the medical doctor before administering any over-the-counter medications, as they may interact with prescription drugs.
- Monitor medication intake closely, ensuring that individuals take the correct dosage at the prescribed times. Document medication administration and any refills needed.
- Pay attention to expiration dates on over-the-counter medications and be mindful of any food or fluid interactions with medications.
- Document any new conditions or side effects that may arise when starting a new medication and report them to the appropriate care manager.

Role and Importance of Nutrition

Maintaining good eating habits and proper nourishment ensures that you receive the essential nutrients needed for energy and overall health. Lifelong dietary patterns significantly impact health in older adults. Many common health issues among seniors, such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, osteoporosis (bone thinning), atherosclerosis (fat buildup in blood vessels), and digestive issues, can be traced back to long-term dietary habits. Proper nutrition is crucial for the care of ill and frail individuals, as it promotes faster healing, aids in recovery, and supports overall health maintenance.

Everyone has unique food preferences and dietary needs. Some individuals have specific dietary requirements, food allergies, or need more time to chew their food. It is important to be attentive, ask questions, and respect each person's dietary choices and needs.

Hydration

Water is vital for preventing dehydration, reducing stress on the kidneys, and ensuring regular bowel movements. It is the most critical of all dietary requirements and essential for life. While a person can survive for weeks without food, they can only survive a few days without water. This is because our bodies are composed of 55% to 75% water, and we lose about 10 cups of water daily through sweating, urination, and breathing.



The amount of water lost daily increases in higher temperatures. Therefore, increased fluid intake is necessary for individuals who:

- Sweat heavily.
- Take tranquilizers, seizure medications, or certain behavioral health medications.
- Drool excessively.
- Suffer from urinary tract infections (UTIs), affecting the kidneys and bladder.
- Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration
- Dry skin, particularly around the mouth, lips, and mucous membranes.
- Reduced skin elasticity.
- Dark, concentrated urine with less frequent urination.
- Decreased or absent sweating.
- Can lead to electrolyte imbalance, disorientation, and even death if untreated.

Preventing Dehydration

- Keep water easily accessible and encourage regular intake.
- Offer other fluids such as shakes, fruit drinks, soups, puddings, and gelatins.
- Avoid caffeinated and sugary beverages, as they can dehydrate the body. Those who consume a lot of coffee, cola, or similar drinks need to increase their water intake.

Considerations for Diuretic Users: People taking diuretics (water pills) may resist drinking water because it increases the frequency of urination. However, insufficient fluid intake signals the brain to retain fluids, worsening the condition being treated. Diuretics are commonly used to treat heart and circulation problems.

Menu Planning

Consumer rights ensure that individuals have the freedom to choose their foods and mealtimes. But what should be done if someone desires food not included in their prescribed diet? In such cases, the caregiver should aim to reach a compromise that adheres to the diet. For instance, if a diabetic person craves chocolate cake, perhaps they can have a small piece while saving the rest for later. If conflicts cannot be resolved or if there are any uncertainties, the DCW



should contact their supervisor for guidance. The following are general guidelines for meals:

Food Allergies: Always be aware of any food allergies, as some can cause severe reactions that may be life-threatening.

Special Diet Orders: Adhere to any special dietary instructions when planning and preparing meals.

Oral Hygiene: Ensure the individual maintains good oral hygiene, assisting with oral care if needed. Poor dental hygiene can lead to gum inflammation, sensitive teeth, pain, difficulty chewing, and decreased appetite.

Dental Appliances: Confirm that dental appliances like dentures and bridges fit correctly and are used properly.

Cultural and Religious Considerations: Everyone has personal food preferences, often influenced by childhood experiences, cultural, and religious traditions. For example, Muslims do not consume pork, and rice is a staple in many Asian cultures. It's important to ask about and respect these preferences instead of making assumptions. Generally, the caregiver can accommodate these preferences unless they exclude entire categories of essential foods. If there are any questions or concerns, it's best to consult with a supervisor.

Foodborne Illness

Foodborne illnesses, commonly known as food poisoning, are transmitted through contaminated food or beverages. Both the very young and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to these illnesses for several reasons:

- **Immune System Efficiency:** Their immune systems are less effective.
- **Stomach Acid:** Aging reduces stomach acid production.
- **Underlying Health Conditions:** Conditions like diabetes, cancer treatments, kidney disease, HIV/AIDS, and organ transplant history increase susceptibility to illness.

To minimize the risk of bacterial infections from food, individuals at higher risk should avoid the following:

- **Raw Seafood:** This includes raw fin fish and shellfish such as oysters, clams, mussels, and scallops.



- Unpasteurized Dairy Products: Raw milk, cheese, and soft cheeses like Brie and Camembert.
- Raw or Lightly Cooked Eggs: This includes egg products in salad dressings, cookie or cake batter, sauces, and beverages like eggnog. Foods made from commercially pasteurized eggs are safe.
- Raw Meat or Poultry
- Raw Sprouts: Such as alfalfa, clover, and radish sprouts.
- Unpasteurized Juices: These will usually carry a warning label indicating they are untreated.

Safe Food Preparation

Washing Your Hands: Proper handwashing is crucial before preparing food. As a caregiver, you might interact with multiple clients and perform various tasks like cleaning, bathing, and food preparation. When preparing food for a client, ensure your fingernails (including fake nails) are clean and your hair is contained (pulled back or covered with a hairnet). Wear disposable gloves to minimize contamination and cover any broken skin with a bandage first. Remember to wash your hands both before putting on and after removing gloves.

Sanitizing Surfaces, Dishes, and Equipment:

- Use only clean utensils for tasting food.
- Sanitize all dishes, utensils, and work surfaces with a bleach solution (1 part bleach to 10 parts water) after each use.
- Clean cutting boards, knives, countertops, sinks, meat grinders, blenders, and can openers with the same bleach solution.
- To sanitize dishes and utensils, ensure water reaches at least 170°F or add bleach to the wash water.
- When using a dishwasher, let the dry cycle complete, as it acts as an effective sanitizer.
- Avoid using kitchen sponges for bathroom-type spills. Discard visibly dirty sponges, and do not use them for washing dishes or cleaning food prep areas.
- Disinfect sponges by soaking them in a bleach solution (1:10) for five minutes.
- Clean the inside of the refrigerator with soap and water to control mold growth.



Washing and Preparing Food: Prepackaged salads and uncooked vegetables are leading sources of foodborne illness in the U.S. Always wash salad greens and raw vegetables before serving. You can also soak them in a weak bleach solution as follows:

- Fill a sink halfway with cool water.
- Add 2 ounces (4 tablespoons or 1/4 cup) of chlorine bleach.
- Soak produce for no more than 5 minutes.
- Rinse the produce in cool water, drain, pat dry, and store. This method also extends the produce's shelf life.

Other Guidelines:

- Consume fresh vegetables shortly after purchase.
- Scrub vegetables like potatoes to remove dirt. Avoid peeling them to retain nutritional value.
- Instead of boiling, microwave, steam, or stir-fry vegetables to preserve nutrients.
- While frying can enhance flavor, it adds extra calories due to the oil.
- Use separate cutting boards for raw meat, poultry, and fish, and another for vegetables and cooked foods. Nonporous acrylic cutting boards are preferable to wooden ones to prevent bacterial spread. Wash cutting boards with soap and water, followed by a rinse with diluted bleach solution.

Defrosting Meat: Follow these safe methods for thawing frozen meat:

- Thaw in the refrigerator.
- Place frozen food in a watertight plastic bag and submerge it in cold water, changing the water frequently.
- Use a microwave, adhering to the manufacturer's instructions.

Safe Food Storage

Meat:

- Store fresh or thawed raw meat, poultry, and fish in the refrigerator.
- Store cooked meat or poultry products in the freezer if you need to keep them longer than a few days.



Canned Foods:

- Discard any commercially canned food showing signs of spoilage—such as a bulging can, leakage, spurting liquid, off odor, or mold. Do not taste it.

Two-Hour Rule:

- Discard any perishable foods left at room temperature for more than 2 hours. When the temperature is above 90°F, discard food after 1 hour.
- Store leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer immediately after the meal.

Refrigerator and Freezer Temperatures:

- Keep refrigerator temperatures between 32°F and 40°F.
- Keep freezer temperatures at 0°F or below.
- Use a thermometer to check temperatures, as refrigerator dials can be unreliable.

Open Containers:

- Avoid storing food in cabinets under sinks, drains, or water pipes.
- Wash the tops of cans and jars with soap and water before opening.
- Store all open containers in a dated, closable container within four hours of opening, and keep them at least four inches off the floor.

Special Dietary Needs

General Guidelines:

- **Read Labels:** Special diets often require limiting or avoiding certain foods or nutrients. Always read labels to ensure compliance.
- **Use Fresh Foods:** Fresh foods are preferable due to better flavor, color, and texture, and they typically contain less salt, sugar, and fat than processed foods.
- **Well-Balanced Meals:** A heart-healthy diet can generally be served to those on diabetic, low-salt, low-fat, or similar special diets.

Low-Fat/Low-Sodium (Heart Healthy Diet):

Daily Recommendations:

- 8-10% of calories from saturated fat
- 30% or less of total calories from fat
- Less than 300 mg of dietary cholesterol



- No more than 2400 mg of sodium

Tips to Reduce Salt:

- Choose low or no-sodium versions of foods and condiments.
- Use fresh, frozen, or low-sodium canned vegetables.
- Opt for fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat.
- Flavor foods with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt-free seasonings.

Diabetic Diet:

- Carbohydrate Counting: Modern diabetic management includes carbohydrate counting. Concentrated sugars are allowed in limited portions and frequency.
- Guidelines: Obtain specific dietary guidelines from the client's physician or supervisor.

Modified Diet:

- Texture Modification: Puree foods or cut them into small pieces for easier chewing and swallowing.
- Stroke Patients: Add thickener to liquids to prevent choking and encourage chewing on the unaffected side.

Other Diets:

- High Fiber: Aids digestion and health. Sources include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and beans. Recommended intake is 25-35 grams per day.
- Renal Diet: For reduced kidney function, limit protein, salt, and potassium. Be cautious with salt substitutes and manage fluid intake if on dialysis.
- Gluten-Free: Avoid wheat, barley, and rye for celiac disease or wheat allergies. Use rice, corn, and potatoes instead. Always read labels.
- Lactose Intolerant: Avoid milk products or use lactose-free alternatives. Increase calcium intake through fish with soft bones and dark green vegetables. Processed cheese and yogurt are usually tolerable.

By following these guidelines, caregivers can effectively manage special dietary needs and ensure the health and well-being of their clients.



Menu Planning and Shopping

Planning meals weekly not only saves time for the caregiver but also helps the client save money by reducing impulse purchases. Collaborating on menu planning with the client and their family empowers the client and respects their food preferences.

- Organize Shopping Lists: Group items by store sections such as meat, dairy, etc.
- Compare Prices: Check newspaper ads, clip coupons, and compare store brands.
- Avoid Overstocking: Don't buy large quantities if storage, handling, or use before expiration is an issue.
- Smart Sales Shopping: Only buy sale items if they are needed and can be stored; otherwise, it's not a bargain.
- Convenient Foods: Buy easy-to-prepare items for times when you can't cook. Keep special diets in mind.
- Smaller Portions: Opt for smaller deli portions instead of preparing large quantities that might go to waste.
- Freezing Bread and Cheese: Freeze these items and use them as needed.
- Eggs and Meat: Eggs have the same nutritional value regardless of size or color. Cheaper cuts of meat, like ground beef, are just as nutritious.
- Poultry: Compare prices between parts and whole chickens.
- Freezer Space: Consider the available freezer space. Buy larger quantities to freeze, wrapping and labeling items individually.
- Freshness Check: Ensure meats and fish are fresh by checking color and smell.
- Avoid Damaged Cans: Don't buy canned goods that are damaged.
- Perishable Foods: Purchase perishable items last to keep them from spoiling, like preventing ice cream from melting during shopping.

By following these tips, caregivers can effectively manage shopping and meal planning, ensuring efficiency and cost-effectiveness while respecting the client's preferences and dietary needs.

