HOME CARE ASSESSMENT

CLIENT/ENVIRONMENT

- Self-care abilities: Assess ability to feed self, to purchase food, and to prepare meals.
- Adaptive feeding aids required: Determine need for special drinking cups, plates, or feeding utensils.
- Instructional needs: Consider nutritional requirements (e.g., Food Guide Pyramid, dietary guidelines, special diet), adaptive aids available, recommended lifestyle variations, and management of enteral/parenteral nutrition.
- Physical environment: Assess adequacy of water, electricity, refrigeration, and telephone facilities; and presence of clean, secure area to store and set up enteral/parenteral nutrition equipment.

FAMILY

- Caregiver availability, skills, and willingness: Primary and secondary persons able to assist with food purchase, meal preparation, and feeding and able to comprehend and administer special diets or enteral/parenteral nutrition required.
- Family role changes and coping: Effect on parenting and spousal roles, financial resources, and social roles.
- Alternate potential primary or respite caregivers: For example, other family members, volunteers, church members, paid caregivers, or housekeeping services; available community respite care (adult day care, senior centers) and so on.

COMMUNITY

- Current knowledge, use, and experience with community resources: Nutritional counseling services; home health agencies for enteral/parenteral nutrition support; dietitian or nutritionist for planning appropriate meals for prescribed diet, ways to include ethnic food preferences into the diet, and providing written meal plans; medical equipment and supply companies; financial assistance services; and support and educational services such as
  - Weight management programs (e.g., Weight Watchers).
  - National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics for information on all nutrition topics.
  - National Eating Disorder Information Center.
  - Meals on Wheels.

CLIENT TEACHING

Healthy Nutrition

- Instruct clients about the content of a healthy diet based on the Food Guide Pyramid and Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Encourage clients, particularly older clients, to reduce dietary fat (see Client Teaching on reducing dietary fat, page 1246).
- Instruct strict vegetarians about proper protein complementation and additional vitamin and mineral supplementation.
- Discuss foods high in specific nutrients required such as protein, iron, calcium, vitamin C, and fiber.
- Discuss importance of properly fitted dentures and dental care.
- Discuss safe food preparation and preservation techniques as appropriate.

DIETARY ALTERATIONS

- Explain the purpose of the diet.
- Discuss allowed and excluded foods.
- Explain the importance of reading food labels when selecting packaged foods.
- Include family or significant others.
- Reinforce information provided by the dietitian or nutritionist as appropriate.
- Discuss herbs and spices as alternatives to salt and substitutes for sugar.

FOR OVERWEIGHT CLIENTS

- Discuss physiologic, psychologic, and lifestyle factors that predispose to weight gain.
- Provide information about desired weight range and recommended calorie intake.
- Discuss principles of a well-balanced diet and high- and low-calorie foods.
- Encourage intake of low-calorie, caffeine-free beverages and plenty of water.
- Discuss ways to adapt eating practices by using smaller plates, taking smaller servings, chewing each bite a specified number of times, and putting fork down between bites.
- Discuss ways to control the desire to eat by taking a walk, drinking a glass of water, or doing slow deep-breathing exercises.

PREVENTING FOODBORNE ILLNESS

- Reinforce hygienic handling of food and dishes.
  - Wash hands before preparing foods.
  - Wash hands and all dishes and utensils with hot water and soap after contact with raw meats.
  - Defrost frozen foods in the refrigerator.
  - Cook beef, poultry, and eggs thoroughly. Use a cooking thermometer.
  - Refrigerate leftovers promptly (at 40°F [5°C] or less) and keep no more than 3 to 5 days.
  - Wash or peel raw fruits and vegetables.
  - Do not use foods from containers that have been damaged or have opened seals.
  - Follow the rules “keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold” and “when in doubt, throw it out”
  - Recommend the client consider a preventive vaccination for hepatitis A.
- Instruct clients to seek medical attention for prolonged vomiting, fever, abdominal pain, or severe diarrhea following a meal.

FOR UNDERWEIGHT CLIENTS

- Discuss factors contributing to inadequate nutrition and weight loss.
- Discuss recommended calorie intake and desired weight range.
- Provide information about the content of a balanced diet.
- Provide information about ways to increase calorie intake (e.g., high-protein or high-calorie foods and supplements).
- Discuss ways to manage, minimize, or alter the factors contributing to malnourishment.
- If appropriate, discuss ways to purchase low-cost nutritious foods.
- Provide information about community agencies that can assist in providing food (e.g., Meals on Wheels).