



Episode 12

Beyond the Plate: A Holistic Approach to Nutrition and Hydration for Older Adults

KEY INSIGHTS



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ABOUT THIS EPISODE: This episode highlights holistic, person-centered nutrition and hydration strategies that support healthy ageing and overall well-being while empowering older adults to live safely and independently at home.

KEY EPISODE INSIGHTS

Integrate nutrition and hydration into every assessment.

Routinely evaluate appetite, weight changes, hydration status, medication effects, swallowing ability, oral health, functional limitations, and psychosocial factors that may contribute to nutritional risk.

Individualize care through person-centered meal planning.

Develop nutrition strategies that reflect each person's medical needs, cultural preferences, food traditions, cognitive status, daily routines, and personal goals to promote adherence and quality of life.

Identify risks early and intervene proactively.

Monitor for signs of malnutrition, dehydration, unintended weight loss, reduced intake, dysphagia, constipation, frailty, and functional decline. Early intervention can help prevent avoidable complications and hospitalizations.

Support successful dining experiences for individuals living with dementia.

Implement evidence-informed approaches such as simplified meal choices, adaptive dining equipment, distraction-free environments, consistent mealtime routines, and cueing techniques that promote independence, dignity, and adequate nutritional intake.

Foster interdisciplinary collaboration and caregiver education.

Partner with dietitians, physicians, nurses, therapists, home care professionals, and family caregivers to reinforce consistent nutrition and hydration practices, address emerging concerns early, and support healthy ageing across the continuum of care.

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

- Nutrition and hydration should be viewed as essential components of comprehensive, person-centered care—not standalone interventions.
- Small, consistent changes often yield meaningful improvements in functional status, quality of life, and overall well-being.
- Regular interdisciplinary communication helps identify nutrition-related risks earlier and supports coordinated care planning.
- Empowering family caregivers with practical education can improve adherence to nutrition and hydration recommendations while reducing caregiver burden.

RESOURCES:

[Canadian Nutrition Society](#)

[Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence](#)

[Total Nutrition Diva On-Call™](#)

[Care Kitchen Senior Nutrition Program \(ComForCare\)](#)