Position of the academy of nutrition and dietetics: food and nutrition for older adults: promoting health and wellness

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J Acad Nutr Diet 2012 Aug; 112;1255-1277;

Abstract

It is the position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics that all Americans aged 60 years and older receive appropriate nutrition care; have access to coordinated, comprehensive food and nutrition services; and receive the benefits of ongoing research to identify the most effective food and nutrition programs, interventions, and therapies. Health, physiologic, and functional changes associated with the aging process can influence nutrition needs and nutrient intake. The practice of nutrition for older adults is no longer limited to those who are frail, malnourished, and ill. The population of adults older than age 60 years includes many individuals who are living healthy, vital lives with a variety of nutrition-related circumstances and environments. Access and availability of wholesome, nutritious food is essential to ensure successful aging and well-being for the rapidly growing, heterogeneous, multiracial, and ethnic population of older adults. To ensure successful aging and minimize the effects of disease and disability, a wide range of flexible dietary recommendations, culturally sensitive food and nutrition services, physical activities, and supportive care tailored to older adults are necessary. National, state, and local strategies that promote access to coordinated food and nutrition services are essential to maintain independence, functional ability, disease management, and quality of life. Those working with older adults must be proactive in demonstrating the value of comprehensive food and nutrition services. To meet the needs of all older adults, registered dietitians and dietetic technicians, registered, must widen their scope of practice to include prevention, treatment, and maintenance of health and quality of life into old age.