

HEALTHWORD
Putting Health Promotion Back in Motion

November 2006

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HEALTHWORD is a monthly e-mail newsletter produced by the American Society on Aging's (ASA's) Live Well, Live Long project. Live Well, Live Long provides education and resources to professionals in the field of aging to help them improve health promotion and disease prevention efforts aimed at older adults. Current and past issues of this newsletter are available on the Live Well, Live Long website at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/HealthWord.cfm>.

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FEATURE:

PROMOTING NUTRITIONAL WELL-BEING FOR ELDERS OF COLOR

Written By: Chaya Gordon, MPH

What we eat, how we obtain our food, and how we eat it are all related to cultural identity. Within a cultural group, individuals may experience and express their culture in different ways, creating a diverse range of identities influenced by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, age, sexual identity, disability, geography, and other factors. As our older population becomes more diverse, nutrition programs need to adapt in order to meet the nutritional needs of all elders.

Nutritional well-being -- making healthful food choices in order to maintain a high level of physical and metabolic function -- can improve the health of elders with chronic conditions and can increase physical, mental, and social functioning throughout the aging process. Because certain chronic diseases affect some ethnic or racial groups more than they do European Americans, creating culturally appropriate nutrition programs becomes is crucial to reaching a greater proportion of the nation's elders.

Many cultural factors affect elders' nutrition, such as the role of food in their cultures or the degree to which immigrants have adopted the mainstream practices and beliefs of their new country. Nutrition programs that help elders make healthful food decisions while maintaining their cultural integrity also can influence how older adults, as the guardians of tradition, pass down these customs to succeeding generations.

To help you, the health or social-services provider, meet the challenge of promoting nutritional well-being for all elders, consider these approaches when working with elders:

1. Learn the cultural role of food-related practices for the individuals you're working with. There is no textbook that can tell you how to tailor nutrition messages to specific elders or communities. Get to know the community and its elders, including information about their nutritional and health status.
2. Examine your own stereotypes about cultural groups, and avoid generalizations such as assuming that all members of the community like the same foods, cook them the same way, or have the same attitudes toward a given food.
3. Prepare translated program materials and use staff that speak the elders' language. Use examples and prepare foods from the elder's culture.
4. Connect your program to the unique cultural characteristics of the community and barriers it faces. Link your program to the community's rituals, music, dance, strengths, and resources.
5. When working with elders with low literacy or with visual, hearing, or cognitive impairments, use visual tools (pictures, photos, diagrams, displays), hands-on demonstrations, and interactive activities.
6. Evaluate the cultural appropriateness of nutrition curricula, Internet resources, and food guidelines, and work with the elders in your program to tailor tools and resources to their culture.
7. Get ongoing feedback from elders in the community. Keep revising and refining your program and materials.

For more information, tools, and resources on cultural approaches to nutritional well-being, read ASA's free online module, "Food for Health: Nutritional Well-Being for Older Adults," at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc>.

**TOOLS YOU CAN USE:
DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS**

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a condition in which a blood clot forms in a deep vein, usually in a leg. Symptoms can include pain, swelling, redness and enlarged surface

veins. However, only about half of all people with DVT have symptoms. If left untreated, blood clots can travel through the bloodstream to the lungs. The following tools may help you understand DVT and reduce elders' risk for this potentially fatal condition:

--> ASA's Deep Vein Thrombosis Health Promotion Module

<http://www.asaging.org/cdc/module9/home.cfm>

Available on the Live Well, Live Long website, ASA's "Deep Vein Thrombosis" health-promotion module contains free resources and information for professionals who work with older adults.

--> Coalition to Prevent DVT

<http://www.preventdvt.org>

The coalition's mission is to reduce the immediate and long-term dangers of DVT and pulmonary embolism through education and prevention. The group's website offers background information on these two conditions, a risk assessment tool, and media releases.

--> Vascular Disease Foundation

<http://www.vdf.org>

The website of the Vascular Disease Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing vascular diseases such as DVT, offers many resources. The following newsletters and pamphlets, all available as PDF files, are of particular interest:

* "Learn About DVT" (<http://www.vdf.org/Downloads/Newsletters/V03-N02-KIC.pdf>)

* "Focus on Blood Clots" (<http://www.vdf.org/Resources/documents/VTEBroWeb.pdf>)

* "Clot Trapping" (<http://www.vdf.org/Resources/documents/V06-N01-KIC.pdf>)

--> The National Alliance for Thrombosis and Thrombophilia

<http://www.nattinfo.org>

The alliance is a nationwide, community-based, volunteer health organization committed to preventing and treating the array of major health problems caused by blood clots. Its website contains information about living with thrombosis as well as news, notices of events, and research findings.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event: Choices for Independence: A National Leadership Summit

Dates: Dec. 4-7, 2006

Location: Washington, D.C.

In light of the successful passage of the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) has added a two-hour postconference intensive to its national leadership summit. On Thursday morning, Dec. 7, senior AoA staff will discuss reauthorization changes and the opportunities they present for collaboration in shaping the future of long-term care. The organizers has also added a preconference

intensive on Tuesday morning, Dec. 4, that will focus on strategies and techniques that area agencies on aging can use to advance long-term care systems change at the community level.

For more information on the main event as well as these intensives, visit <http://www.aoa.gov/Choices/Summit/summithome.htm>.

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Event: National Environmental Public Health Conference
Dates: Dec. 4-6, 2006
Location: Atlanta

The CDC's National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry are hosting their seventh National Environmental Public Health Conference. Workshops that may be of interest to health promotion professionals include "Fires, Falls, and Fleeting Moments," "Injury Control and the Built Environment," and "Approaches to Promoting Public Health Research Into Practice." To learn more about the conference, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/conference/>.

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For more educational offerings in the field of aging, visit the searchable "Events in Aging" calendar on the ASA website: <http://www.asaging.org/calendar>.

Have an event related to health promotion and aging that you would like to tell your colleagues about? Please submit your event, call for papers, or grant announcements to Betsy Dorsett at betsyd@asaging.org. Include the title, organization, date and time, location, contact information, and a short description of the event.

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