Stepping Up Your Nutrition: Malnutrition Risk Program

Goal: Participants will understand the importance of balanced nutrition in the prevention of falls and be able to identify the key warning signs of inadequate nutrition.

Objectives- Participants will:
- Understand how nutrition status, muscle strength, and general health are linked to falls risk
- Learn how both exercise and protein are key to maintaining strong muscles
- Identify key food groups for healthy, balanced meals
- Recognize the importance of protein and fluids for older adult nutrition, and determine how much is needed daily
- Identify personal nutrition risk status and discuss appropriate next steps
- Set personal goals for behavior change to improve nutritional status and muscle health

Anticipated Length of Workshop: 2 ½ hours (includes breaks and assessments)

Stepping Up Your Nutrition (SUYN) is an innovative, interactive workshop developed to:
- Help older adults remain independent
- Prevent falls-related admissions;
- Increase awareness of the link between malnutrition and falls risk.

Key messages include:
1) How nutrition and muscle strength impact falls risk;
2) Exercise, fluids and protein maintain and build strong muscles;
3) Steps to reduce falls risk.

A validated nutrition risk self-assessment and clinical measurement of handgrip strength provide participants information about their malnutrition risk. Role play, problem-solving activities, planning tools to increase liquids and proteins, reading food labels and making an action plan give participants the skills and confidence to make changes. The workshop is delivered by peers trained in evidence-based programs and is designed as a ‘session zero’ before falls or self-management programs.

Falls are the leading cause of injury among older adults. Falls and fall injuries threaten older adult independence and increase healthcare costs. Fall-related injuries are among the most expensive medical conditions. Given the enormous economic burden of falls and the challenges falls exert on older adults and their families, prevention strategies need to be accessible to communities. In existing falls prevention programs for older adults, little attention is given to nutrition. Yet, nutrition plays a fundamental role in falls prevention.
Malnutrition can cause substantial losses in lean body mass which make older adults more susceptible to falls. Without proper nutrition, older adults may not be able to successfully recover from falls and are at increased risk for hospital readmission. Because older adults are not routinely screened for malnutrition, it often goes undiagnosed.

**Older Adults at Risk for Falls and Malnutrition:**

**Falls**
- According to the CDC, falls are the most common cause of nonfatal trauma-related hospital admissions for older adults.
- Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall. Falls threaten an older adult’s independence and significantly increase healthcare costs—in 2015, costs for falls to Medicare alone totaled over $50 billion (1).
- Falls injuries are among the 20 most expensive medical conditions.

**Nutrition** plays a fundamental role in falls prevention:
- Malnutrition can lead to fatigue and can cause substantial losses in lean body mass which make older adults more susceptible to falls.
- Without proper nutrition, older adults may not be able to successfully heal and recover from falls and are at increased risk for hospital readmission.
- Unfortunately because older adults are not routinely screened for malnutrition, up to one out of two older adults are at risk for malnutrition.

**Public-Private Partnership:**
- Maryland Department of Aging
- Maintaining Active Citizens (MAC) Center of Excellence program
- Abbott Nutrition.

The *Stepping Up Your Nutrition* (SUYN) curriculum is taught in conjunction with existing evidence-based falls prevention or chronic disease self-management programs (2).

The collaborative goals:
- Highlight nutrition as a core component in falls prevention programs,
- Keep older adults strong and independent in their homes, and
- Prevent falls-related admissions to Maryland-based hospitals.

The class is highly participative, allowing older adults to learn in a fun and interactive way.
The 2-hour workshop focuses on:

- How nutrition status, and muscle strength are linked to falls risk
- How exercise and protein are key to maintaining strong muscles
- The importance of protein and fluids for older adult nutrition
- Identification of personal nutrition risk status
- Setting personal goals to improve nutritional status and muscle health

All Stepping Up Your Nutrition (SUYN) classes are led by a trained professional with experience working with older adults, and by a trained peer who is an older adult with strong interest in nutrition.

**Session Zero:**

In a study performed from the national dissemination of Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME) programs, participants who attended workshops with a Session Zero were significantly more likely to successfully complete CDSME workshops (i.e., attend 4+ of the 6 workshop sessions) (3).

**References:**

(2) Funding for the creation of SUYN and evaluation studies were provided through an Administration for Community Living grants. (90INNU0002).
MALNUTRITION RESOURCES

Malnutrition Awareness Week, September 24-28, 2018  www.nutritioncare.org/maw/

Community/Non-Clinical Resources
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/nutrition/healthy-eating/what-is-malnutrition
- Community Malnutrition Resource Hub  https://www.ncoa.org/center-for-healthy-aging/resourcehub/
- DefeatMalnutrition.Today  www.defeatmalnutrition.today
- National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging  http://nutritionandaging.org

Clinical Resources
- Malnutrition Quality Indicators Initiative  http://mqii.defeatmalnutrition.today/mqii-toolkit.html
- Alliance to Advance Patient Nutrition (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses, Society for Hospital Medicine, Abbott Nutrition).  http://malnutrition.com/