

Medical Nutrition Groups

Medical Nutrition Therapy

The client needs reinforcement in remembering how to eat properly and prepare healthful meals. Many clients have been sedentary for long periods of time and have gained excess weight or developed diabetes or other complications. Mental, emotional and physical health improves when nutritional needs are met. Learning to eat well is an investment in the health of the whole family, not just the client with the brain injury.



Nutrients supply the body with energy and substances to build and maintain healthy organs and fight off infection. Since balanced nutrition helps improve mood and health, it is important to encourage an improved diet in people with a brain injury. When blood sugar levels fluctuate due to the irregular intake of food, there can be irritability and depressed feelings. Many often forget what it's like to be hungry and may need positive reinforcement to eat.

By killing and damaging brain cells (the factories which make neurotransmitters) and disrupting the synapses where neurotransmitters are exchanged, traumatic brain injury reduces the amounts of neurotransmitters which reach their targets. As a consequence the client with a TBI experiences slowed cognition, impaired memory, depression, apathy and irritability. A person with a TBI can least afford to eat lots of bad fat and little good fat, because all of those problems will be compounded. Proper nutrition is needed to recover and resume normal brain function. Clients' nutritional habits and beliefs are assessed and clients are given information on healthy eating habits, meal and menu planning, as well as an opportunity to create dishes and prepare meals that are healthy and nutritious.

Clients who also have a substance use disorder, or who are improperly self-medicating may be compounding their nutritional deficits and placing additional demands on the body -- including metabolism (processing energy) fluctuations, organ function, and mental well being. Research has shown that treatment centers that provide nutritional programs have a greater than 70% success rate compared to only 20% or less when psychology and behavior modification are the only modalities. Proper nutrition can repair much of the damage of both substance abuse and a dysfunctional family system. Sessions are one hour in length and documented in a progress note to include date, times, and signature of client. Services are provided by a certified nutritionist.

