

# APRIL FALLS DAY

## ***Nutrition and Hydration – Eating well to prevent falls***

Poor nutrition and dehydration occurs when a person is not eating enough of the right foods or drinking enough fluids. This can increase their risk of a fall.

### **Spotting the signs of poor nutrition and hydration**

#### **Obvious weight loss**

- Losing weight unintentionally
- Loose clothes, belts, jewellery or dentures
- Appears underweight
- Looks frail

#### **Complains of gastrointestinal symptoms**

- Diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting or constipation

#### **Food Intake**

- Loss of appetite: eating less than usual or misses meals
- Meals not being eaten or food rotting (building up in the fridge or freezer)
- Little food in fridge
- Can't use stove or microwave anymore

#### **Fluid Intake**

- Drinking less than usual
- Dry mouth, lips, eyes or skin
- Strong smelling urine or prone to urinary tract infections
- Complains of headaches or constipation
- Dizziness

#### **Psychological**

- Changes in mood: becoming depressed and lethargic
- Poor concentration and memory, easily distracted
- May appear confused

#### **Muscle Loss**

- Collar bone sticks out
- Temple area on head hollowed out
- Muscles wasted between fingers
- Calf muscle wasted and knee prominent
- Looks thin and frail
- Can also be obese with very poor muscle mass and be frail
- Pressure ulcers

#### **Poor oral health**

- Tooth loss and decay
- Loose dentures
- Difficulty chewing or swallowing
- Sore or bleeding mouth or gums

#### **Loss of Function**

- Feeling weak, tired and less energetic
- Being less physically active
- Difficulty standing and getting out of chairs
- History of falls
- Feels cold, difficulty getting warm

#### **Inability to procure sufficient food**

- Being housebound
- Poor income
- Living alone/no Carer
- Physical or mental health issues

*The key is to ensure that the underlying causes are recognised and managed.  
If you notice these signs - please follow up with GP or your local health provider for  
advice and/or referral to a dietitian*

With thanks to CCLHD and NSLHD