



Nursing Care Plan

A Client with Malnutrition

Rose Chow is an 88-year-old widow who lives alone. She typically rises early and has a cup of tea before spending her morning pattering in her garden. She consumes her main meal of the day at lunch, which usually includes rice and some vegetables. For dinner, she generally eats a bowl of rice with “whatever seems to be in the refrigerator.” She admits to little interest in cooking or eating since her husband died 10 years ago and her group of friends has been “dying off, too.”

ASSESSMENT

Mrs. Chow weighs 95 lb (43.1 kg) and is 5'3" (160 cm) tall, for a BMI of 16.8. She reports weighing 118 lb (53.5 kg) 5 years ago. Her triceps skinfold thickness measurement is 11 mm (normal values for a female: >13 mm). Her skin is pale, and she appears thin and wasted. Her temperature is 97°F (36.1°C). Diagnostic test results include serum albumin 2.9 g/dL (normal 3.4 to 4.8 g/dL) and serum cholesterol 130 mg/dL (normal 150 to 200 mg/dL). A diagnosis of protein-calorie malnutrition is made, and a 1500-calorie per day diet is recommended.

DIAGNOSES

- *Imbalanced nutrition: Less than body requirements*, related to lack of knowledge and inadequate food intake
- *Risk for infection*, related to protein-calorie malnutrition
- *Impaired social interaction*, related to widowhood and reduced social support group

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Gain at least 1 pound per week.
- Verbalize understanding of nutritional requirements and identify strategies to incorporate requirements into daily diet after discharge.
- Remain infection free, evidenced by normal vital signs.

- Identify strategies to increase social interaction, such as participating in senior citizens' lunches at local senior center.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Weigh weekly at a consistent time of day.
- Refer to dietitian for evaluation of nutritional needs.
- Teach about nutritional requirements, and plan an eating program that includes high-calorie, high-protein foods and supplements and reflects her food preferences. Encourage small, frequent meals.
- Encourage to keep a food intake diary.
- Teach strategies to reduce risks for infection.
- Provide information about communal meals available to seniors in the community, and help Mrs. Chow develop a plan to participate.

EVALUATION

One month later, Mrs. Chow has gained 3 pounds and reports feeling “more energetic.” A friend is helping her shop to ensure that she purchases foods to maintain her protein, calorie, and nutrient intake. She has begun attending senior lunches twice a week, and is enjoying “being around people again.” Although she still doesn't enjoy cooking like she used to, she is using prepared foods and supplements to maintain her nutrient intake.

Critical Thinking in the Nursing Process

1. What is the physiologic basis for Mrs. Chow's low albumin and cholesterol levels?
2. Mrs. Chow asks, “Can I get better by just taking more vitamins?” How will you respond?
3. Design a teaching plan for a Hispanic client with protein-calorie malnutrition.

See Evaluating Your Response in Appendix C.