



Nutritional Counseling

Brief

Description

Nutrition counseling has an important place in the dental care setting given the clear relationship between dietary factors and dental caries and the association between obesity, diabetes and periodontitis.¹⁻³ Nutritional counseling can be defined as a cooperative mode of interaction between the patient and health care provider aimed at assisting patients in adopting healthy dietary behaviors associated with improved health outcomes.⁴ Moreover, it is an important step in determining whether nutritional deficiencies/imbbalances exist and assessing the need for necessary referrals.⁵

The association between dietary factors and adverse oral health outcomes is multi-factorial and complex with inter-related pathways between dietary intake (food consumptions), nutritional status (body composition, biomarker levels of micronutrients) and lifestyle behaviors. Patients should be informed that not only the types of carbohydrates but how the frequency, consistency, and position of their consumption in meals can increase risk of dental caries.⁶ For example, patients can decrease risk of caries through behavior modifications such as, minimizing the frequency of sugary foods, decreasing the consumption of those with sticky consistencies or fine particles and ending meals with low cariogenic foods. Additionally, edentulous patients have significantly lower intakes of dietary fiber, protein, vegetables, calcium, iron, and other essential vitamins than dentate individuals, so dental care professionals should provide nutritional counseling based on the patients unique oral health needs.^{7, 8} Personalized and tailored nutritional counseling such as the guidance provided by dental care professionals should be altered based on age, socio-cultural background and health literacy.¹