Eating through the stages of HD

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Outline

- Patient interview
- Nutrition and swallowing issues in each stage
- Helpful tools and resources
- Questions?
Dietitian & Speech Path roles

- HCMC HD Clinic
  - See the pt/family together
  - Nutrition history – typical day
  - Oral mechanism/motor speech exam
  - Swallow exam
Patient interview with RD/SLP
Eating well with HD—Early

Pre-symptomatic & early stages of HD

- If weight loss then weight repletion
- Eat a variety of foods & textures
- Myths about “super nutrients” or “superfoods”
  - Antioxidants
  - Omega-3 fatty acids
  - B vitamins
- Eat at the table
- See a Dietitian to learn about ideal body weight & calorie needs
- See a Speech Pathologist for a baseline exam and tips / strategies for safe swallowing
Eating well with HD – Middle

Middle stages

- Increased chorea
- Increased calorie needs – can be >3000
  - Don’t skip meals
  - Supplement/snacks as needed
- More difficulty with self-feeding, meal preparation
- May become forgetful about meal times
- Talk about tube feeding wishes early
- Dysphagia may be apparent
What happens with people with HD?

- Involuntary movements
- Decreased muscular control
- Sudden inhalation, coughing, choking
- HD can affect every phase of the swallowing process
Middle stages (cont):

- Initial signs of dysphagia may be noted; coughing or choking
- Problematic foods:
  - Particulates
  - Crunchy
  - Chewy
  - Stringy
- See an Occupational Therapist for ideas for adaptive equipment if needed
Warning signs of dysphagia

- Clearing the throat frequently
- Stuffing food in the mouth
- Tilting the head back to eat or drink
- Swallowing several times for one bite
- Food or liquid spill from the mouth
- Coughing during or after the swallow
More warning signs ...

- Impulsivity
- Wet sounding voice
- Difficulty controlling the rate of food intake
- Difficulty initiating the swallow
- Difficulty chewing or controlling food or liquid in the mouth
Pay attention to texture

- Particulates
- Crunchy
- Chewy
- Stringy
Diet modifications

- Eliminate target foods from the diet

- Change from a Regular diet to a Soft diet
  - Cut meats into small pieces
  - Grind and moisten meats
  - Cook all vegetables
  - Limited options with fresh fruit
  - Canned fruit, applesauce, baked fruit
Diet modifications

- Change from a Soft diet to a Pureed diet
  - Dysphagia Diet – Levels 1, 2, 3 may be recommended by a Speech Pathologist
  - Increased dependence on others for assistance with feeding
  - Might be a struggle to get enough calories each day
  - Supplements, high calorie shakes, 1000 Calorie Shake, Super Cereal, etc.
Thickened liquids

- Rarely a desirable option
- Aspirating thin liquid – may be inconsistent
  - Utilize strategies to avoid thickening liquids
    - SMALL sips
    - Head in a neutral position
    - Small size straws
    - Avoid gulping
    - Go slow
- Variety of thickeners and thickened beverages available
Late stages
- More pronounced dysphagia
- Pureed diet
- Weight loss is common
- Tube feedings, if appropriate
Nutrition and HD summary

- High calories needed
- Plan ahead for meals / snacks
  - Keep pureed leftovers in freezer, single size portion
  - Sauces, gravies to flavor and moisten foods
- Keep ready to eat snacks or supplements on hand
- Consider purchasing food processor, blender for ease of meal preparation
- Calorie containing beverages with meals
FAQ’s

- What should I eat to prevent HD?
- Do I need to take a vitamin?
- What if I’m supposed to follow a low fat diet for my high cholesterol?
- Can I eat when I have a tube feeding?
In conclusion...

- Dietitian and Speech Pathologist roles and how we can help
- Good food and safe textures can help improve quality of life
Questions?

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Slides available at www.hdsa.org

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