



# Nourishing the Elderly

HACC Nutrition Service



# In this presentation....

- What do we mean by healthy eating for older Australians?
- What is malnutrition?
- Why is it important to prevent malnutrition?
- What causes malnutrition?
- How can we detect risk of malnutrition?
- What can your service do?
- Discussion/questions



# Healthy Eating for Older Australians

- Breads and cereals – 4 or more serves
- Vegetables – 5 serves
- Fruit – 2 serves
- Dairy/alternatives – 4 serves
- Meat and alternatives – 1 serve
- Extras – 0-2 serves
- Fluid – at least 8 glasses a day



# Malnutrition

“A state of energy, protein or other specific nutrient deficiency which produces a measurable change in body function, and is associated with a worse outcome from illness, as well as being specifically reversible by nutritional support”

(Allyson 2000)

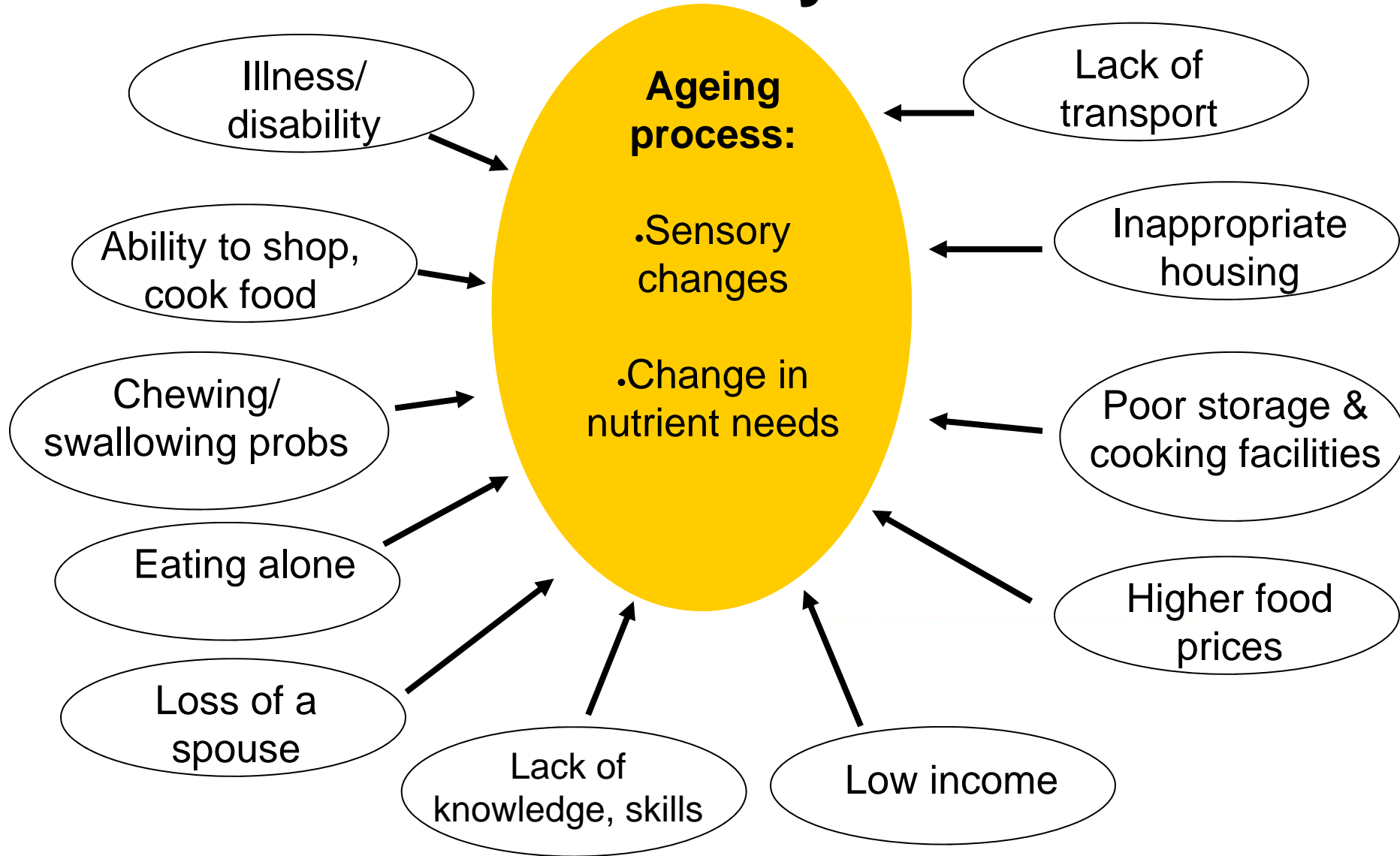


# Why is malnutrition an issue?

- Poor nutrition can be linked to: -
  - Higher risks of infection
  - Slow wound healing
  - Longer hospital stays
  - Poorer long term health outcomes
- Malnutrition affects quality of life



# What causes malnutrition in the elderly?



# Scenario 1

- A tiny lady who is quite underweight.
- She has sores on her legs that aren't healing and she has been ill recently and is struggling to recover.
- Her usual diet is mainly tea and toast.
- A friend commented that “she is elderly and it's normal to be frail when your old” – implying that there was no need to worry.



# Scenario 2

- An elderly man who is a bit overweight and lives alone.
- He attends a day centre once each week and has a nutritious meal there.
- Everyone assumes he is doing well and his family says that he seems to be coping okay.
- But his main food intake is toast, biscuits and fried takeaway foods from the corner store.



# Screening for malnutrition...and acting on the results.

- Why is it important?
  - ✓ reduce risk of falls and fractures
  - ✓ reduce need for more assistance and support
  - ✓ reduce complications
- How can services do it?
  - ✓ ask a few key questions
  - ✓ use screening tool
  - ✓ build into normal service activity
  - ✓ document



# Identifying Malnutrition

Have they got a reduced appetite or reduced food or fluid intake?

Have they lost or gained weight recently without trying?

Are they able to shop, cook and feed themselves?

Do they have teeth, mouth or swallowing difficulties that makes it hard to eat?

Do they eat alone most of the time?

Are they following a special diet?



# Identifying Malnutrition

Do they take 3 or more different medications every day?

Do they have 3 or more alcoholic drinks every day?

Do they eat 3 meals per day?

Do they eat fruit, vegetables and dairy on most days?

Do they always have enough money to buy food?

Are they obviously underweight/frail?

Do they have at least 8 cups of fluid every day?



# In Summary

- Risk of malnutrition is common
- Malnutrition is a significant problem affecting health of older people
- HACCC Services have a role to play in preventing malnutrition
- Screening for malnutrition is important but needs to be embedded into existing procedures
- Simple actions can then help prevent or address malnutrition



# Questions and discussion...

