

GERIATRIC MEDICINE Skills Fair—STATION 2

Nutritional risk assessment: Determine checklist

STUDENT CASE A: Mrs. Thinner

Mrs. Thinner is an 88 year old woman living alone in her own home. She receives the DETERMINE checklist in a newsletter for older adults, and decides to complete it. How will she score?

Her family members mostly live out of town, and she is widowed. Her medical problems include hypertension, diabetes, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, osteoporosis, arthritis, & urinary incontinence.

She is on 11 prescription medications, and she thinks some of them reduce her appetite and make her mouth dry. She usually doesn't feel like eating breakfast, and since she eats alone, she often doesn't feel much like fixing regular meals at other times of day. Her doctor has cautioned her to avoid fatty foods, salty foods, and sweets—all of which are her favorites. She finds it hard to figure out what is really OK to eat that also tastes good. She tires quickly when standing in the kitchen trying to cook.

She has never cared much for dairy products, and fresh fruits and vegetables are hard for her to afford on a fixed income. (Over one-third of her monthly income goes to pay for her medications.) She only gets to the grocery store about every 3 weeks when her cousin can take her, so she stretches her food to make it last until the next shopping trip. Although there is a small grocery store on the corner of her block, her arthritis and consequent mobility problems make it too hard for her to walk that far, and besides, she says her neighborhood isn't safe enough to walk alone. She does not drink alcohol.

In addition to her medical problems, she had little dental care over the years, and her few remaining teeth have been in very poor condition. Her doctor thought that chronic infections of her gums were contributing to problems controlling her blood sugars, so she finally had all her remaining teeth pulled recently. However, she doesn't think her new dentures fit very well. She finds herself avoiding foods

that require much chewing, and is still on a mostly 'soft' diet despite having accomplished the extraction of the troublesome teeth. She is discouraged about that.

Mrs. Thinner thinks she has lost about 12 pounds over the last 6 months.