

# TELEHEALTH NUTRITION COUNSELING AND POSITIVE PATIENT ENGAGEMENT

## MAKING TELEHEALTH WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR PATIENT

Provide an overview of what your patient can expect

### BEFORE THE VISIT:

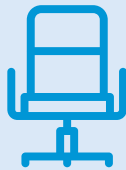
- Confirm the date and time of the appointment with the patient
- Ensure the patient knows the technology you plan to use
- Make sure the patient knows how to use the technology; if they don't, ask if they have someone who can help them
- Create a backup plan in case there are technology challenges



### DAY OF VISIT:

- Inform patients ahead of time about the types of information they may need to provide during the telehealth appointment, such as weight, eating habits, etc.
- Have visuals available (such as charts, pamphlets or food models) to facilitate your virtual nutrition counseling and education

## WAYS TO CREATE A POSITIVE TELEHEALTH EXPERIENCE



### OFFICE SPACE

- Private
- Quiet and conducive to discussion
- Well-lit to make it easy for the patient to see you
- Free of extra papers, clutter and background distractions



### TECHNOLOGY

- Position your camera at eye level
- Practice using the technology you want your patients to use
- Prepare for possible "technical difficulties," like muted sound, distorted audio, streaming delays and connection issues



### YOUR DELIVERY

- Go through the entire process with a colleague so you can modify your approach, if necessary
- Allow for added time during a visit compared to an in-person visit. This will allow for technology challenges and will create a more positive experience
- Explore ways to recreate the rapport you provide in person
- Remember to smile and engage with your patient

# THE SECRET TO SUCCESS IS OPEN COMMUNICATION

## SHOW EMPATHY

Demonstrate your desire to get to know the patient beyond their disease.

### HOW:

Ask questions about family, work, sleep, stress, beliefs and culture

### WHY:

When providing care by telehealth, it's important to emphasize empathy in order to foster the same trust and open communication we would in person

### RESULT:

Patients will evaluate their viewpoints and behaviors, and feel empowered to implement suggested changes

## ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Ask specific questions about your patient's day-to-day experience

### WHAT TO ASK:

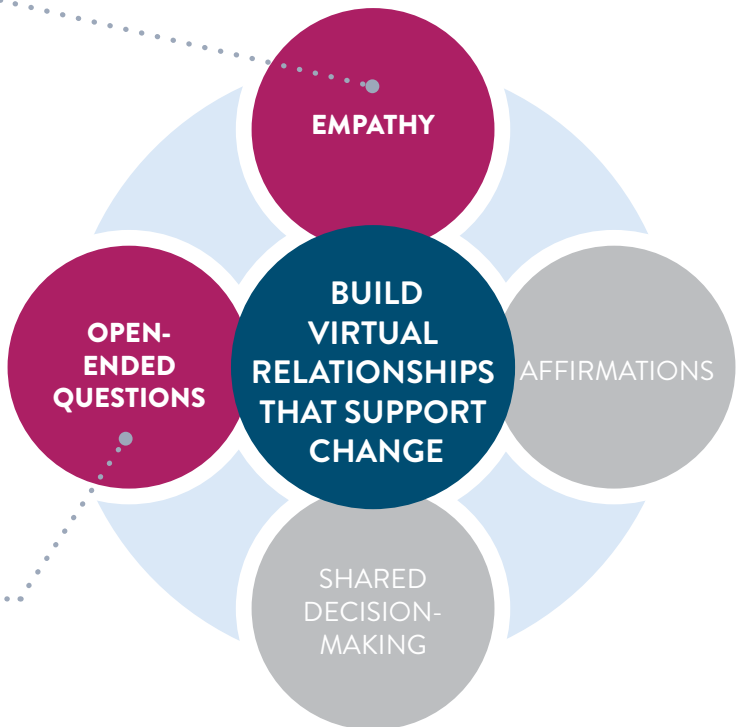
- "What changes have you seen in your weight, eating patterns, and exercise habits?"
- "Tell me more about your access to food or ability to grocery shop."
- "In what ways has stress impacted your social or mental health?"
- "In what ways, if any, do these factors affect your food intake?"

### WHY:

Asking these clarifying questions can help provide key insights into the patient's lifestyle and help prioritize their needs

### RESULTS:

- With the information collected, set specific and relevant goals
- Gain greater buy-in from your patient



## USE PROMPTS THAT PUT THE PRESSURE ON YOU, NOT THE PATIENT

### WHAT TO ASK:

"I want to make sure I've done a good job explaining this information. Can you share with me what you heard?"

### WHY:

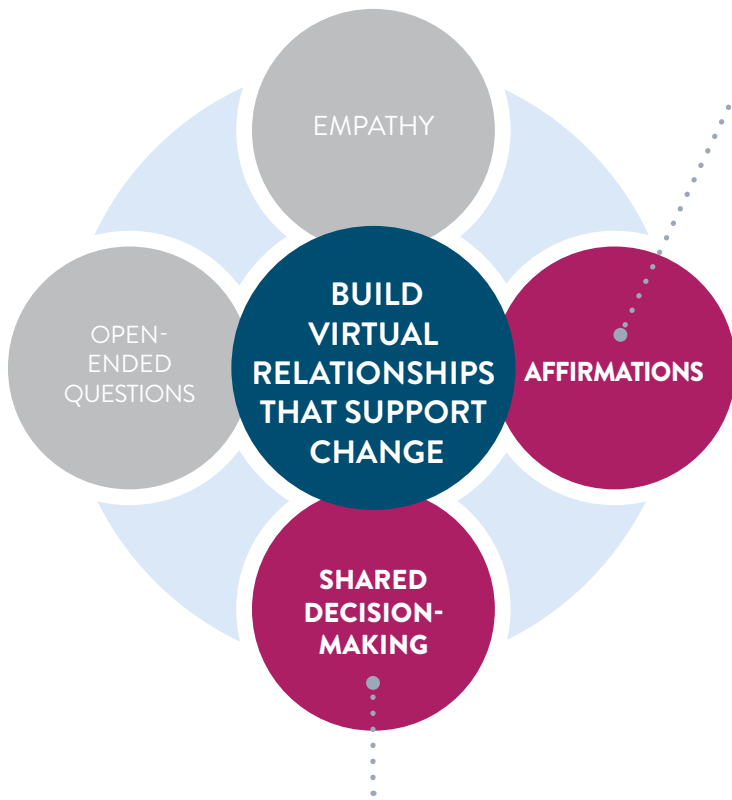
- Knowledge checks can help ensure your patient fully understands the concepts you've discussed together
- Checking in also gives you an opportunity to correct any information your patient may have misunderstood

### RESULTS:

Your patient may feel more empowered and able to carry out your recommendations when they feel like they've fully understood and retained what they've learned

**IMPORTANT TIP:** It can sometimes be challenging to read visual cues and body language over a camera. Be sure to use verbal prompts to check for understanding throughout the visit.

# THE SECRET TO SUCCESS IS OPEN COMMUNICATION



## AFFIRM THEIR EFFORT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Focus on your patient's efforts to meet goals; help them connect their actions to their feelings

### WHAT TO ASK:

- "How do you feel about your progress towards this goal?"
- "How would you feel if you met your goal?"

### WHY:

Helping your patient understand how their actions relate to their progress can help build internal motivation and inspire further positive change

### RESULT:

Motivated patients are more likely to change their behaviors and achieve their goals

## MAKE DECISIONS TOGETHER

Empower your patient to own their goals

### WHAT TO ASK:

- "Based on what we discussed today, what option(s) should we focus on first?"
- "How will that option align with what you hope to achieve?"

### WHY:

Goal-setting and empowerment can boost autonomy and patient buy-in

### RESULTS:

- Empowered patients are less resistant to change
- Goal achievement can help build confidence and support continued change

## IDENTIFY PATIENTS THAT ARE AT RISK FOR POOR NUTRITIONAL STATUS

Be sure to screen your patient's nutritional status during each telehealth visit. Be on the lookout for patients who have:

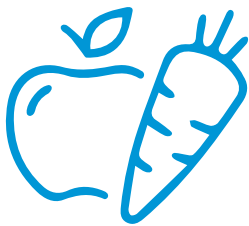
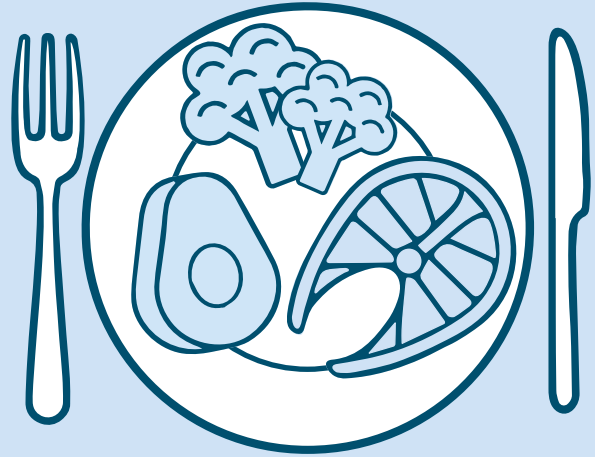
- DECREASED APPETITE
- DECREASED FOOD INTAKE
- UNINTENTIONAL WEIGHT LOSS
- COMPROMISED HEALTH CONDITIONS

Poor nutritional status can impact immune health, both increasing the patient's risk of becoming ill and impairing their ability to heal. These patients may require extra support to meet their nutrition needs. For those patients with poor nutritional status, be sure to discuss with them strategies to improve their overall dietary intake and ensure they are getting the good nutrition they need to stay healthy.

# FOCUS ON GOOD NUTRITION DURING COVID-19

As telehealth visits have become more common during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's important to build discussions around nutrition into our routine, making it part of our standard of care. Addressing nutrition at each visit ensures we're caring for the whole patient and supporting their overall health.

Eating a well-balanced diet is an important part of maintaining immune health, especially during stressful times. During your telehealth visits, provide support to your patients to successfully focus on good nutrition as a baseline strategy for physical health and wellness—in addition to the other health goals they are focusing on.



## CONSUMING A HEALTHY DIET

- Share with your patients the connection between the foods they eat and their overall health, especially in supporting a healthy immune system during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Discuss how important nutrients, such as protein and essential vitamins and minerals, play a role in their health



## MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WEIGHT

- Talk about the need to maintain a healthy weight, especially when eating habits and exercise routines may be disrupted
- Discuss energy balance and its role in a healthy weight; encourage patients to reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and processed foods. Stress the importance of incorporating more fruits and vegetables into their diets



## OBTAINING REGULAR EXERCISE

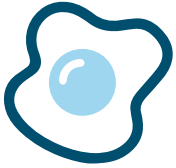
Explore ways to incorporate exercise into changing routines, from walking and gardening, to online exercise videos



## ENSURING ADEQUATE FLUID INTAKE

- Encourage your patients to drink plenty of water each day by explaining the role of fluid in maintaining good health
- Identify strategies to ensure adequate daily hydration

# HELP SUPPORT AND MAINTAIN YOUR PATIENT'S IMMUNE HEALTH WITH NUTRITION



**PROTEIN** helps build antibodies and immune system cells and plays an important role in healing and recovery.

**Sources:** Eggs, milk, yogurt, fish, lean meats, chicken, turkey, beans, soy products, nuts and seeds



**VITAMIN C** helps build healthy skin, which is a barrier to microorganisms, and helps protect cells from damage due to its role as an antioxidant (a substance that helps protect cells).

**Sources:** Citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruits, tangerines), strawberries, papaya, bell peppers, and Brussels sprouts



**VITAMIN A** keeps the skin, tissues in the mouth, stomach, and intestines, and the respiratory system healthy, and it helps regulate the immune system.

**Sources:** Colorful foods like carrots, sweet potatoes, broccoli, spinach, pumpkin, squash, and cantaloupe



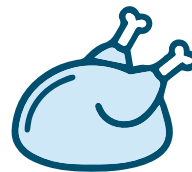
**VITAMIN E** protects immune cells from damage due to its role as an antioxidant.

**Sources:** Almonds, sunflower seeds, peanut butter, vegetable oil, spinach, and broccoli



**VITAMIN D** helps with properly regulating immune cell function.

**Sources:** Fortified foods (milk, cereal, orange juice), fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, tuna), and sunshine



**ZINC** supports creation of new immune cells, which contributes to the body's ability to heal from wounds.

**Sources:** Lean meats, chicken, turkey, crab, oysters, milk, whole grains, seeds

Patients who have poor food intake, or who have compromised health conditions, may require support to meet their nutrition needs. Oral nutritional supplements (ONS) can provide protein, vitamins, and minerals to help support the immune system.



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