

Determine Your Nutritional Health Handout

Date: _____

Score: _____

If your Nutritional Health Score is:

- 0 – 2 **Good!** Recheck your Nutritional Health Score in six months.
- 3 – 5 **You are at moderate nutritional risk.** See what can be done to improve your eating habits and lifestyle. Your senior nutrition program, area agency on aging, senior citizens center, county extension agent or health department may be able to help. Recheck your Nutritional Health Score in three months.
- 6 or more **You are at high nutritional risk.** The next time you see your doctor, dietitian or social service professional, talk with them about any problems you may have. Ask for help to improve your nutritional health.

The Determine Your Nutritional Health Checklist is based upon the warning signs described below. Use the first letters of the word **DETERMINE** to remind you of the warning signs.

Disease

Any disease, illness or chronic condition that causes you to change the way you eat, or makes it hard for you to eat, puts your nutritional health at risk.

Eating Poorly

Eating too little and eating too much both lead to poor health. Eating the same foods day after day or not eating fruit, vegetables and milk products daily will also cause poor nutritional health.

Tooth Loss/Mouth Pain

A healthy mouth, teeth and gums are needed to eat. Missing, loose or rotten teeth or dentures that don't fit well, or cause mouth sores, make it hard to eat.

Economic Hardship

Having less than, or choosing to spend less, than \$25 - \$30 per week for food makes it very hard to get the foods you need to stay healthy.

Reduced Social Contact

Being with people daily has a positive effect on your morale, well-being and eating habits.

Multiple Medicines

The more medicines you take, the greater the chance for side effects such as increased or decreased appetite, change in taste, constipation, weakness, drowsiness, diarrhea, nausea, and other side effects. Vitamins or minerals when taken in large doses act like drugs and can cause harm. Alert your doctor to everything you take.

Involuntary Weight Loss/Gain

Losing or gaining a lot of weight when you are not trying to do so is an important warning sign that must not be ignored. Being overweight or underweight also increases your chance of poor health.

Needs Assistance in Self Care

Although most older adults are able to eat, one of every five has trouble walking, shopping, and buying and cooking food as they get older.

Elder Years Above Age 80

Most older adults lead full and productive lives. But as age increases, risk of frailty and health problems increase.