Importance of Protein for the Older Population

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Benefits:
- Iron (found in animals, foods and body absorbs the most from these) used to carry oxygen
- Used in every cell in your body
- Builds, repairs tissues
- Makes enzymes, hormones and other chemicals

Applied Nursing Research:
- A skilled nursing facility ran a test on malnourished (half severely malnourished) elderly patients.
- 30 day test, half patients received an oral protein supplement
- Results: The patients receiving supplements had significantly increased prealbumin levels.

Potential Problems:
- Dry skin or skin lesions
- Edema (collection of watery fluid in tissues)
- Inability to maintain body temperature (more likely to get sick)
- Weight loss
- Anxiety
- Loss of appetite

Recommendations:
- Maintain muscle and prevent loss: 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight
- Gaining muscle mass: 1.2-1.4 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight
- Protein from food (steak, fish, chicken) is absorbed better
- If you are struggling to meet to the recommendation, a supplement is advised

Prealbumin: This is a protein made in the liver and released to the blood stream that helps carry hormones that regulate the way the body uses energy.

Sarcopenia: At the age of 30, every decade if you are physically inactive, you may lose up to 5% muscle mass and function. This process is known as sarcopenia.