

PREFACE

The practice of medical nutrition therapy and the care of the older adult have continued to evolve based not only on advancing science but on a change to a more person-directed care model in part because of the baby boomer generation. This new group of clients has an awareness of health care and potential expectations. Many have taken an active role in wellness and physical activity and have high expectations when it comes to nutrition care and the healthcare delivery system.

It is commonplace to think of nursing facilities and older adults together—to consider nursing facilities as the primary option for older adults who need care while regarding older adults as the population most likely to use nursing facilities. But there are good reasons to reconsider such assumptions. On the one hand, changes in health care delivery have led to the development of home health agencies and assisted living; on the other hand, there is a continued need for facilities that can handle individuals of all ages with cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injury, or other illnesses and injuries requiring subacute or rehabilitative services. As a result, a wide range of clients with varying needs and living environments presents new challenges and opportunities for dietetics professionals.

The demands of the registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) are even stronger. RDNs must provide a high level of medical nutrition therapy for the individuals they assist: assessing nutrition needs, developing goals for clients, directing the implementation of nutrition plans to meet those goals, documenting relevant data, and evaluating results with outcomes research in mind. Along with all of this, the stresses of the changes in Medicare, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA),

and all laws must be taken into account. This book provides RDNs with up-to-date, useful material for use in this ever-changing environment. Although it is not intended to be all-inclusive, *Nutrition Care of the Older Adult* provides important guidance and the foundation for the nutrition care of older adults wherever they call home—nursing home, assisted living, independent living, or the house down the block. Information set forth in this book is based on current and up-to-date research and evidence-based guidelines available in the scientific and medical literature but, as always, should be reviewed in light of any new research findings and clinical guidelines as they become available.

For this revision, we once again sought out professionals within our field as well as experts outside the dietetics profession who are passionate about promoting the health of the older adult. We are grateful to the contributors for sharing their expertise. We are also indebted to the reviewers who took the time to thoughtfully critique the content. Proper nutrition care is crucial for all our clients. Demand for our services is even stronger with the growing number of older adults. We urge our readers to accept the challenge to meet the nutritional needs of clients and provide excellent, quality care for all those served using the knowledge gleaned from the following chapters.

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CONTENTS

Contributors	v
Reviewers	vii
Foreword	ix
Preface	xi
Continuing Professional Education Credit	xiii

PART I

Introduction to Nutrition Care in Older Adults 1

1. Nutrition in Older Adults: An Overview 3
2. Community-Based Nutrition Services 17
3. Person-Driven Care 30
4. Maintaining Independent Dining Skills 39
5. Nutrition Care Process 50

PART II

Nutrition Assessment, Consequences, and Implications 71

6. Nutrition Assessment of Older Adults 73
7. Unintended Weight Loss 107
8. Implications of Abnormal Hydration Status 122
9. Consequences of Poor Oral Health 134
10. Etiology and Risks of Swallowing Disorders 147
11. Anemia and Its Effect on the Older Adult 159
12. The Aging Kidney and Renal Disease 169
13. Nutritional Aspects of Diabetes 176
14. Consequences of Cancer 186

- 15. Skin Integrity 198
- 16. Laboratory Assessment 214
- 17. Implications of Drug-Nutrient Interaction and Pharmacology 233
- 18. Nutrition Support 251
- 19. Palliative Care: End of Life 268
- 20. Preventing Rehospitalization 285

PART III

Standards for Compliance 299

- 21. Federal Regulations 301
- 22. Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement 326
- 23. Scope of Practice for the RDN and NDTR 337
- 24. Understanding the Risks for Litigation 346
- 25. Electronic Health Records and Other Health Care Technologies 351
- 26. Emergency Management 359

APPENDIX

Sample Facility Planning and Policy Documents for Emergency Preparedness 369

- Index 384

CHAPTER

5

Nutrition Care Process

Prior to the creation of the Nutrition Care Process (NCP), there was no single standardized method for documenting nutrition care services and establishing the benefit provided by those services. This lack of standardization made it difficult to extract data about the results of the care provided by each nutrition and dietetics practitioner. Medical nutrition therapy (MNT) was evaluated as a possible way to standardize care. However, MNT is a method for using nutrition care to treat a medical diagnosis that lacks definitions for care processes and outcomes. For that reason, MNT is an element of NCP but is not the total process. Therefore, a standardized method needed to be developed. A brief history follows:

- 1998: The American Dietetic Association (ADA; now the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics) Health Services Task Force (now the Council on Research) considered MNT as a method for documentation, but this method was found to be too limited, and MNT was rejected in this capacity by the committee.
- 2001: A focus group was established to identify the value of nutrition services.
- 2002: The Nutrition Diagnosis and Nutrition Care Process Task Force made recommendations to ADA leadership.
- 2003: The Nutrition Care Process Standardized Language Committee began developing a standardized language for the dietetics profession.
- 2003: The Nutrition Care Process and Model (NCPM) was published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.
- 2005: The first standardized nutrition diagnosis language for dietetics was published in the *Nutrition Diagnosis Manual*.
- 2007: The *International Dietetics and Nutrition Terminology (IDNT) Reference Manual* was first

published, with further editions published biannually between 2009 and 2013. These publications expanded standardized terminology to include nutrition assessment, nutrition intervention, and nutrition monitoring and evaluation as well as nutrition diagnosis.

- 2014: The electronic Nutrition Care Process Terminology (eNCPT) was released.

NUTRITION CARE PROCESS OVERVIEW

As noted by Lacey and Pritchett in the original article about the NCP, “providing high-quality nutrition care means doing the right thing at the right time, in the right way, for the right person, and achieving the best possible results” (1). The purpose of the NCP is to support the critical-thinking process of dietetics practitioners and give them a standardized terminology for documenting in a consistent manner the individualized nutrition care provided to each resident/client or group. By establishing a standardized process for providing care, the NCP helps improve data collection and analysis about the outcomes of that care. Thus, dietetics practitioners can measure the evidence about care, rather than relying on experience and other subjective, nonstandard measures. The use of evidence-based care makes the registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) and the nutrition and dietetics technician, registered (NDTR) *the* expert nutrition services providers (2).

The NCP has four distinct steps along with two supporting systems (see Box 5.1 and Figure 5.1) (3):

- Step 1: Nutrition assessment
- Step 2: Nutrition diagnosis
- Step 3: Nutrition intervention
- Step 4: Nutrition monitoring and evaluation

BOX 5.1 Four Steps in the Nutrition Care Process

Step 1: Nutrition assessment—To obtain, verify, and interpret data to identify a nutrition-related diagnosis.

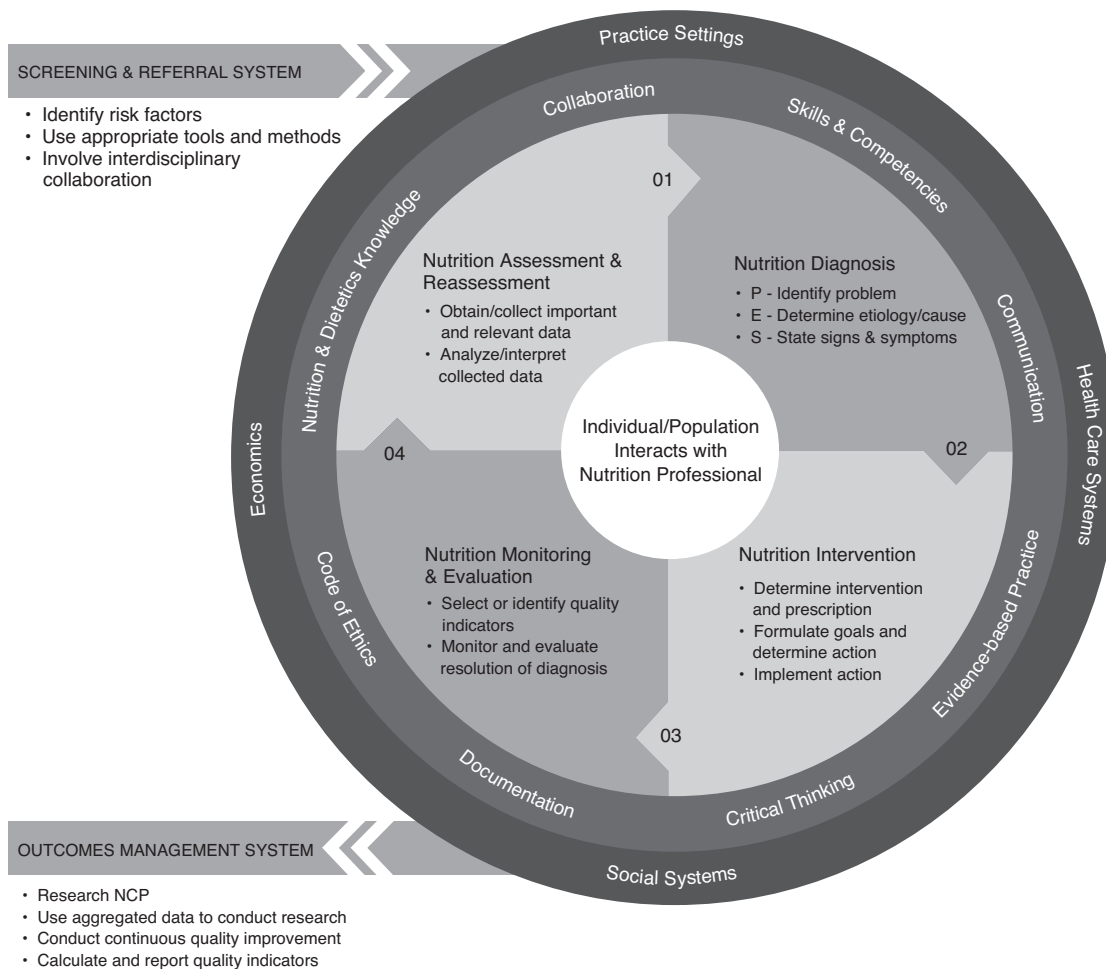
Step 2: Nutrition diagnosis—To identify nutrition diagnoses that are clear within and outside the profession that the food and nutrition professional is responsible for treating independently. The nutrition diagnosis is conveyed in a problem-etiology-symptoms (PES) statement.

Step 3: Nutrition intervention—To plan and implement the nutrition interventions needed to improve or resolve the nutrition-related diagnosis. The interventions are directed at the etiology of the diagnosis (PES statement).

Step 4: Nutrition monitoring and evaluation—To determine and measure the amount of progress made for the interventions and to see if related goals/outcomes are met, thus determining the effectiveness of the interventions by selecting care indicators and the criteria to which the indicator is compared.

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Nutrition assessment introduction. Nutrition Terminology Reference Manual (eNCPT): Dietetics Language for Nutrition Care. Nutrition Care Process Introduction. <http://ncpt.webauthor.com/pubs/idnt-en>. Accessed January 25, 2016..

Figure 5.1 The Nutrition Care Process Model



Source: Reprinted with permission from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Nutrition Terminology Reference Manual (eNCPT): Dietetics Language for Nutrition Care. <http://ncpt.webauthor.com>. Accessed January 25, 2016.

The supporting systems are

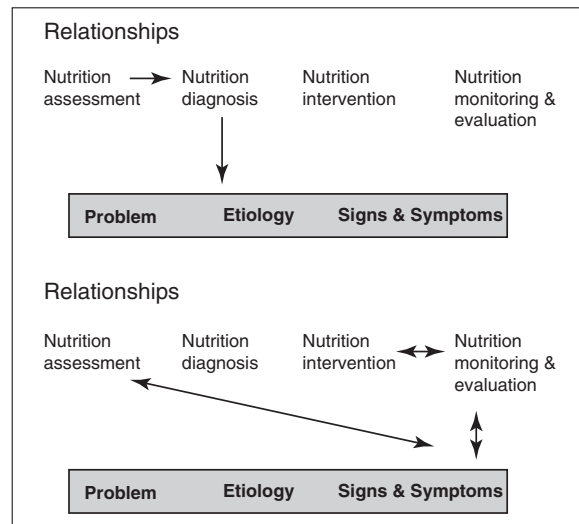
- screening and referral systems and
- outcomes management systems.

The screening and referral systems can be completed by the RDN or inpatient nutrition staff; however, nutrition screening is most often completed by other health care professionals. The outcomes management systems track the progress of a group of multiple residents/clients through the NCP, as opposed to the progress of an individual. Outcomes management is an important part of the total quality management and performance evaluation. The analysis of outcomes data (evidence) helps dietetics practitioners modify performance and practice to improve the quality of care.

In brief, if a nutrition screen/referral indicates a potential problem that could benefit from nutrition care, the RDN begins the standardized NCP by conducting a nutrition assessment (Step 1). If the RDN then determines that there is a nutrition problem, he or she makes a nutrition diagnosis (Step 2). Next, the RDN plans and implements a nutrition intervention that addresses the identified nutrition problem/diagnosis (Step 3). Outcomes of the intervention are subsequently monitored and evaluated (Step 4). This may reveal that the client or group needs further assistance from the RDN to reach recommended nutrition goals. If so, the NCP cycle should continue until goals are met. Figure 5.2 demonstrates how the NCP steps provide a framework for the provision of nutrition care for residents/clients or groups.

As described in the remainder of this chapter, each step in the NCP has its own set of critical thinking skills to assist the RDN in determining the needs of each step. The Academy's Career Development Guide (CDG) has adapted the Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition to outline the progression of critical thinking skills of the RDN and NDTR as they improve their knowledge and experience with their practice. The CDG lists the following stages of progress: novice, beginner, competent, proficient, and advanced practice/expert. The foundation of dietetics is developed in the novice and beginner stages. The competent stage is the entry-level knowledge and skills base that was developed to apply to the care settings. This stage is where the development of critical thinking skills improves as work experience is obtained. The proficient stage is when the RDN and NDTR have developed their ability to prioritize, generalize, apply problem-solving skills to new scenarios, and identify innovative solutions utilizing their critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills need to be intuitive for the RDN and NDTR to transition into the advanced practice/expert stage (4). The Academy has updated Scope of Practice and Standard of Professional

Figure 5.2 Relationships of Nutrition Care Process Steps



Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Nutrition assessment introduction. Nutrition Terminology Reference Manual (eNCPT): Dietetics Language for Nutrition Care. NCP Step 1: Nutrition Assessment. <http://ncpt.webauthor.com/pubs/idnt-en/page-001>. Accessed January 25, 2016.

Practice documents for the RDN and the NDTR. The practice paper, "Critical Thinking Skills in Nutrition Assessment and Diagnosis," on critical thinking skills related to the NCP is available at the Academy's website (see www.eatrightpro.org) (5).

Step 1: Nutrition Assessment

Nutrition assessment is a systematic method of obtaining, verifying, and interpreting data needed to identify nutrition-related problems, their causes, and their significance (6). As noted previously, the assessment may be initiated by a referral and/or by the screening of individuals or groups for nutritional risk factors. Following a resident/client referral or a positive nutrition screening, the RDN uses nutrition assessment to determine whether the resident/client might benefit from nutrition care and if a nutrition diagnosis/problem exists. If, after the initial assessment or reassessment is completed, the RDN determines that a nutrition problem does not exist or has been resolved or that there is no nutrition intervention that would benefit the resident/client, then discharge or discontinuation from nutrition care would be appropriate.

Assessment data should be relevant, accurate, and timely. The purpose of nutrition assessment is to verify and interpret the information needed to determine whether nutrition problems/diagnoses exist. The use of standardized nutrition assessment language enhances the communication between RDNs, their residents/clients,

and other health care professionals. Nutrition assessment terminology groups assessment data into five different domains. (See Box 5.2.)

BOX 5.2 Five Domains of Nutrition Assessment (Step 1)

- Food/Nutrition-Related History
- Anthropometric Measurements
- Biochemical Data, Medical Tests, and Procedures
- Nutrition-Focused Physical Findings
- Client History

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Nutrition assessment introduction. Nutrition Terminology Reference Manual (eNCPT): Dietetics Language for Nutrition Care. Nutrition Assessment Snapshot. <http://ncpt.webauthor.com/pubs/idnt-en/page-022>. Accessed January 25, 2016.

The nutrition assessment includes:

- reviewing data collected to identify factors that affect nutritional and health status;
- clustering data elements that support a nutrition diagnosis as described in the nutrition diagnosis reference sheets published in the Nutrition Care Process Terminology; and
- identifying standards against which the assessment data will be compared.

The specific types of data collected in the assessment step vary depending on the practice settings, the present health status of the individual or group, how data relate to the outcomes to be measured, recommended practices (such as Evidence-Based Nutrition Practice Guidelines), and whether the assessment is an initial evaluation or a reassessment.

Nutrition assessment requires making comparisons between the data collected and reliable standards of care. It is an ongoing process that involves not only the initial data collection but also the continual reassessment and analysis of resident/client or group needs. The nutrition assessment provides the groundwork for determining the nutrition diagnosis in the second step of the NCP.

The nutrition and dietetics practitioner uses critical thinking skills during nutrition assessment to ensure that appropriate care is provided (see Box 5.3). Examples of critical thinking in nutrition assessment include the following: determining the appropriate data to collect, validating the data, and distinguishing relevant from irrelevant data in order to arrive at the most appropriate nutrition diagnosis.

Step 2: Nutrition Diagnosis

Nutrition diagnosis is a critical step between nutrition assessment and nutrition intervention. Its purpose is to identify and describe a specific nutrition problem that can be resolved or improved through interventions by the RDN.

Nutrition diagnosis should not be confused with medical diagnosis. A medical diagnosis can be defined as a disease or pathology of specific organs or body systems that can be treated or prevented. A medical diagnosis does not change as long as the disease or condition exists. However, a nutrition diagnosis can change as the resident's/client's or group's response changes. For example, a resident/client may have the medical diagnosis of type 1 diabetes, which will not change until a cure for the disease is found. However, the nutrition diagnosis for this individual could vary over time. At one point, a nutrition assessment may lead the RDN to diagnose, for example, "Inconsistent carbohydrate intake"; later, the nutrition diagnosis "Excessive carbohydrate intake" might be better supported by the assessment data.

After evaluating the assessment data and determining the nutrition diagnosis(es), the RDN has an evidence base for developing interventions, setting realistic goals and measurable expected outcomes, and tracking the progress in meeting those expected outcomes. Nutrition assessment data should be clustered as signs and symptoms that support the nutrition diagnoses documented by the RDN. Diagnoses should be prioritized based on critical assessment of what problems are most important to resolve and within the RDN's scope of practice to address. The standardized nutrition diagnosis terms are

BOX 5.3 Critical Thinking Steps During Nutrition Assessment

- Determining appropriate data to collect
- Determining the need for additional information
- Selecting assessment tools and procedures that match the situation
- Applying assessment tools in valid and reliable ways
- Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant data
- Distinguishing important from unimportant data
- Validating the data

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Nutrition assessment introduction. Nutrition Terminology Reference Manual (eNCPT): Dietetics Language for Nutrition Care. Nutrition Assessment Snapshot. <http://ncpt.webauthor.com/pubs/idnt-en/category-1>. Accessed January 25, 2016.

INDEX

- absorption, nutrient, 6, 87, 124, 159–160, 161–163, 166–167, 171, 194, 236, 245, 253, 257
 food-drug interactions, 84, 185, 234–235, 246–247, 248–249
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 17, 50, 57, 76, 135, 341
 Dietetics Career Development Guide, 52, 340
 Electronic Health Records Toolkit, 353
 “Ethical and Legal Issues in Feeding and Hydration,” 113, 277
 Evidence Analysis Library (EAL), 55, 76, 87, 252, 354
 Evidence-Based Nutrition Practice Guidelines, 55, 108, 186, 354
 Health Informatics Infrastructure (ANDHII), 57, 339, 353–354
 Oncology Nutrition Evidence-Based Nutrition Practice Guidelines Workgroup, 186–188
 Quality Management Committee, 340
 Standards of Excellence, 338–339
 Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance (SOP/SOPP), 327, 329, 342–343
 Unintended Weight Loss in Older Adults Evidence-Based Nutrition Practice Guideline, 108
- acetate, 120–121, 172, 274
- achlorhydria, 10, 159
- activities of daily living (ADL), 25, 32, 287, 306
- American Dietetic Association (ADA). *See* Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- adaptive equipment, 40, 41–42, 316–317
 for dysphagia, 151
- adjusted weight, 80
- ADL. *See* activities of daily living (ADL)
- Administration for Community Living (ACL), 24
- Administration on Aging (AoA), 19, 20–21, 24, 361, 365
- adult daycare/adult day health, 20, 22, 24–25
- adverse drug reactions, 11, 77, 233, 234
- Affordable Care Act. *See* Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- African American, 78, 176, 186, 241
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), 26, 330
- Age-Related Eye Disease Study 2 (AREDS2), 6
- age-related macular degeneration (AMD), 6–7
- Agriculture, US Department of. *See* US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- AHEI-2010. *See* Alternate Healthy Eating Index 2010 (AHEI-2010)
- AICR/WCRF. *See* American Institute for Cancer/World Cancer Research Fund
- AIDS, 120, 162, 166–167, 223, 227, 229, 282. *See also* HIV
 weight loss, 108, 109, 120
- alanine aminotransferase (ALT), 216, 218
- albumin, 10, 76, 83, 120, 128, 129, 130, 171, 215, 217, 227–228, 237, 245, 253, 263
- alcohol, 10, 111, 137, 151, 166–167, 181, 220, 221–222, 229, 238, 274, 282–283
 abuse, 10, 77, 238
 drug interactions, 234, 235, 238, 241, 246–247
- alcoholism, GI symptoms and, 238
- alendronate, 234
- allopurinol, 7, 85, 111, 166, 216, 219, 229
- alpha glucosidase inhibitors, 185

- ALS. *See* amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
- ALT. *See* alanine aminotransferase (ALT)
- Alternate Healthy Eating Index 2010 (AHEI-2010), 4
- alternative medicine. *See* complementary and alternative medicine (CAM)
- aluminum binders, 172
- Alzheimer's disease, 7, 9, 85, 120, 151, 155, 276
- ambulatory care centers, 27
- ambulatory care-sensitive diagnoses (ACSDs), 287
- American Cancer Society, 187
- American Diabetes Association, 177
- American Institute for Cancer Research/World Cancer Research Fund (AICR/WCRF), 186, 187
- American Medical Directors Association (AMDA), 32
- dehydration guidelines, 125–126
- American Red Cross, 361
- American Indian, 105, 176
- Alaska Native, 176
- American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (A.S.P.E.N.), 255, 259
- amino acids. *See* protein
- amoxicillin, 166
- amputation, 80–81
- amylin agonist pramlintide, 185
- amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), 155, 269
- analgesics, 9, 236, 238, 249
- ANDHII. *See* Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Health Informatics Infrastructure (ANDHII)
- anemia, 83, 159–168, 187, 199, 220, 222, 223, 224, 228, 229
- in chronic kidney disease, 171, 172
- classifications, 160–161
- etiologies of, 83, 159
- implications for practice, 164
- lab tests, 161, 162, 163, 164, 166–167, 168, 216, 217
- medications, 166–167
- anemia of chronic disease, 83, 159, 161, 162–163, 168, 172, 222–223
- ano-rectum, 5
- anorexia, 6, 7, 77, 84, 86, 107, 108, 111–112, 273, 274, 275. *See also* weight loss
- cancer and, 187, 190, 191, 195
- drugs associated with, 6, 7, 77
- medications, 112–113
- antacids/acid blockers, 164, 166, 246, 173, 250
- anthropometrics, 53, 56, 58, 60, 62, 64, 74, 77–78, 80, 81, 109, 113, 253
- antibiotics, 7, 111, 148, 166, 223, 225, 226, 228, 238, 246
- antibiotic therapy, 26, 62, 260
- anticholinergic effects. *See* medications, side effects
- anticoagulants, 219, 238, 239, 246, 248
- anticoagulation therapy, 261
- anticonvulsants, 7, 111, 166–167, 239, 246
- antidiabetics, 246
- antiepileptics, 6, 148
- antihistamines, 7, 9, 85, 111, 238, 246
- antihyperlipidemics, 239, 247
- antihypertensives, 149, 218, 236, 239, 241, 247
- antineoplastics, 111, 166, 188, 189, 223, 225, 247
- antioxidants, 9
- aphasia, 44
- appetite, 4, 6, 8, 42, 74, 108–109, 110, 113, 195, 234, 268, 274
- appetite stimulants, 121–113, 120–121
- apraxia, 44
- ARD. *See* Assessment Reference Date (ARD)
- AREDS2. *See* Age-Related Eye Disease Study 2 (AREDS2)
- ascites, 75, 79, 85, 225, 226, 227, 259
- ascorbic acid, 7, 148, 229, 248
- drug interactions, 248
- aspartate aminotransferase (AST), 216, 218, 263
- aspiration, 40, 46, 134, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 194, 256, 259–260, 273, 275, 276, 281
- aspirin, 83, 148, 166, 216, 218, 219, 223, 225, 228, 229, 237, 246, 249
- Assessment Reference Date (ARD), 305, 311
- Asian American, 104–105, 176
- Japanese American, 105
- Korean American, 105
- Vietnamese American, 105
- assisted living, 25, 27, 77, 337, 346
- atherosclerosis, 228
- atrial natriuretic factor, 124
- Axid, 246
- azotemia, 220, 225, 260
- barbiturates, 166, 220, 237, 246, 250
- basal energy expenditure (BEE), 82, 96, 97
- bed-bound client, 46
- Beers criteria, 233–234
- belching, 282