

Summary of a PowerPoint Presentation of the Bariatric Specialist Group 2024: Eastern Nutrition & Bariatrics – Cultural Perspectives

1. Aim of the Presentation

The presentation focuses on improving **cultural competence in nutritional counseling**, especially for people with migration backgrounds. It emphasizes understanding cultural, social, and religious influences on eating behavior to provide more effective and respectful care.

2. Migration-Specific Assessment

A comprehensive assessment should include:

- **Origin and background** (education, social status, healthcare experience)
 - **Migration history** (reasons, trauma, voluntary vs. forced migration)
 - **Integration status** (housing, work, healthcare access)
 - **Family dynamics**
 - **Future perspectives** (possible return to home country)
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3. Social and Cultural Aspects of Eating

- Eating is **highly social** and often done in groups.
 - Hospitality is very important:
 - Guests are offered large amounts of food.
 - Refusing food may be considered rude.
 - Family plays a **central role in dietary habits**.
 - Eating patterns vary depending on lifestyle (e.g., working vs. staying at home).
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4. Religion and Nutrition (Islam)

- Many individuals follow **Halal dietary rules**:
 - Allowed: fruits, vegetables, grains, halal meat.
 - Forbidden: pork, alcohol, non-halal meat.
 - **Ramadan**:
 - Fasting from sunrise to sunset.
 - Important spiritual meaning (discipline, gratitude).
 - Ends with a large celebration (Eid al-Fitr).
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5. Nutrition During Ramadan (especially after bariatric surgery)

- Fasting is **not recommended in the first 12–18 months post-surgery**.
 - Key recommendations:
 - Ensure **adequate protein intake (~100 g/day)**.
 - Stay hydrated between sunset and sunrise.
 - Eat slowly and chew well.
 - Prefer **low-fat, protein-rich foods**.
 - Structure meals carefully (e.g., light soup, then main meal).
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6. Turkish Food Culture

Key characteristics:

- High intake of:
 - **White bread, rice, bulgur**
 - **Fats** (olive oil, nuts)
- Protein sources:
 - Legumes, yogurt, cheese, some meat
- High consumption of:
 - **Sweet drinks, tea, and coffee with sugar**
- Low alcohol consumption.

Meal patterns:

- **Breakfast:** often skipped during weekdays, large on weekends.
 - **Lunch:** quick, often pastry-based (e.g., börek).
 - **Dinner:** main meal, large portions, social event.
 - **Snacks:** nuts, sweets, dried fruits (high calorie).
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7. Nutritional Counseling Considerations

- Address:
 - High intake of **sugary drinks and sweets**
 - Frequent consumption of **white bread**
 - **Large portion sizes**, especially in the evening
 - **Underreporting of food intake**
 - Respect emotional and cultural attachment to traditional foods.
 - Offer **realistic alternatives**, not strict prohibitions.
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8. Balkan Food Culture

- No single unified cuisine, but common traits:
 - Mediterranean influence
 - Strong social importance of food
 - Typical foods:
 - Bread, meat, dairy, alcohol (e.g., rakija)
 - Meals are often:
 - Large, rich, and eaten in groups
 - Tradition plays a major role in food preparation.
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9. African Food Culture (General Insights)

- Eating is **communal**, sometimes from one shared dish.
 - Strong belief: **food must be eaten** (hard to control portions).
 - Common foods:
 - Couscous (North Africa), white bread
 - High consumption of:
 - Sweet drinks and sweet tea (often multiple times daily)
 - Food can symbolize **wealth and well-being**.
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10. Communication Strategies in Counseling

Effective methods include:

- **Ask Me 3** (problem, action, importance)
 - **Teach-back** (patient repeats information)
 - **Chunk and Check** (small steps + understanding checks)
 - Use of visual aids and simple language
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11. Special Considerations in Bariatric Care

- Discuss:
 - Medication and supplement access during travel
 - Long-term follow-up and lab checks
 - Plans for returning to home country and continuity of care
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Schweizerischer Verband
der Ernährungsberater/innen
Association suisse
des diététicien-ne-s
Associazione Svizzera
delle-dei Dietiste-i

Key Takeaway

Culturally sensitive nutritional counseling requires:

- Understanding **social, religious, and emotional factors**
- Adapting recommendations to the patient's **cultural context**
- Building trust through **respect, curiosity, and collaboration**