

# Frailty What Have We Learned from Women's Health Initiative Participants?

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## Frailty in Aging Women

What is frailty? How can we recognize it in older women?

Who is most likely to be/become frail?

What are the consequences of becoming frail?

How can we prevent frailty?

#### What is Frailty? How Can We Recognize It?

- Weakness—decreased grip strength
- Slowness–slow walking speed
- Poor endurance, exhaustion feeling worn out, tired, lack of energy or pep
- Low levels of physical activity
- Unintentional weight loss (shrinking, sarcopenia)



#### Who Were Most Likely to Become Frail in 3 Years?

- Older Women 70-79 > 60-69 years
- Lower family incomes
- Less formal education
- Current smokers
- Current hormone therapy users
- Women who were underweight or overweight
- African American women less likely

### Women with Chronic Illnesses More Likely to Become Frail

- Congestive heart failure
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Treated high blood pressure
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Arthritis

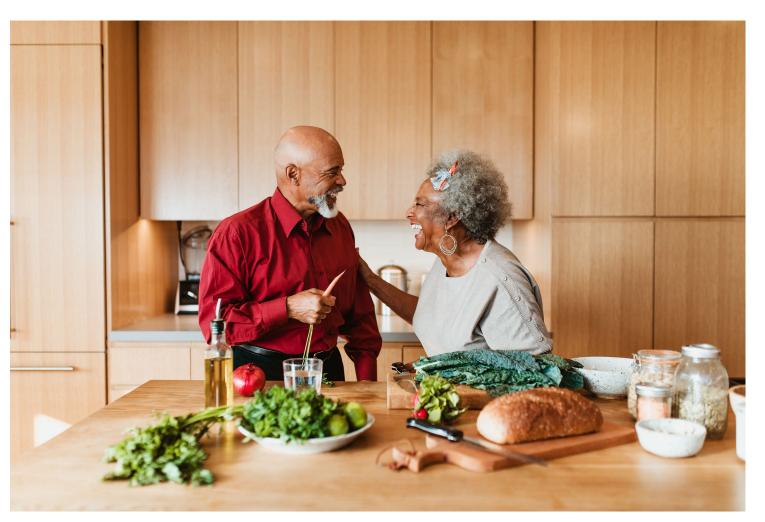
#### After 3 years, frail women were more likely to:

- be living with others, less likely living alone
- rate their health as fair or poor
- report symptoms of depression
- have difficulty with activities of daily living

## In 3 years, women who were frail also were more likely to have:

- fallen 2 or more times in the past 12 months
- been hospitalized
- fractured a hip
- died

#### Can Frailty be Prevented? How?



- Physical activity to maintain muscle mass
- Eat healthy diet protein for muscle
- Active mind and body

#### Physical Activity



Muscle strength training

Walking



#### Physical Activity



Walking & strength training

Walking groups—for support & safety



#### Physical Activity



Classes such as dancing

Swimming & water aerobics



Physical Activity – upper body workout



#### Eating A Healthy Diet

- WHI Participants Eating More **Protein**—Less Likely to Become Frail
  - Protein for muscle mass
  - Low fat milk
  - Fish, poultry, meats
  - Cooked dried beans
  - Yogurt, lower fat

## Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Diet > Lower Rate of Frailty

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Nuts, Legumes
- Low-fat Dairy
- Whole Grains
- Sodium (limited)
- Sweetened beverages (limited)
- Red and processed meats (limited)

#### Mediterranean Diet > Lower Rate of Frailty



Fruits and vegetables Beans and other proteins, Fish Healthy fats, olive oil Low fat dairy Nuts



Limit meats and sweets!

Whole grains



#### Active Mind

Purposeful Living Social Engagement



Thank you for your help in studying older women's health!!