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If you do not understand this leaflet, we can arrange for an interpreter.

إذا كنت لا تستطيع فهم محتويات هذه النشرة فيمكننا عمل الترتيبات لتوفير مترجم شفوي لك.

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如你不明白本單張的內容，我們可安排口譯員服務。

如你不明白本傳單的內容，我們可安排口譯員服務。

اگر مندرجات این جزوه را نمیفهمید، ما می‌توانیم مترجم در اختیارتان بگذاریم.

Jeśli masz trudności w zrozumieniu tej ulotki, możemy zorganizować tłumacza.

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Ref number: DS 206

Publication Date: Feb 2018

# Dietary Information for Carers - Nutrition in Dementia



## Importance of nutrition

Eating and drinking well is important to maintain health and well-being and meal times should be a pleasurable time in the day.

This can be a challenge as we get older particularly for people with memory loss due to poor appetite, reduced sense of smell, tiredness or chewing and swallowing difficulties.

Sometimes people have difficulties communicating or recognising feelings of hunger and so eat less. Not eating enough can cause weight loss which can worry both patients and carers.



Eating and drinking is important socially. Offering personalised support can help maintain independence and improve self esteem.

Smaller, more frequent meals with regular nourishing snacks may be easier to manage if feeling tired.



Familiar foods and childhood favourites can be very comforting however tastes can change over time, so if old favourites aren't being eaten offering a variety of foods can help or adding sauces or pickles/ chutneys on the side to boost flavour.

## **What do I do when someone doesn't want to eat?**

It is very common for people in the later stages of dementia to lose their appetite and have no interest in eating. It can be very difficult watching a friend or relative refusing to eat and drink, but we know that age-related weight loss and reduced activity levels mean the body requires much less energy to function and often people don't feel hungry or thirsty.

The best approach is to offer small amounts of food and nourishing fluids regularly to maximise the total amount taken in the day. Sometimes people may want food at unusual times of day, perhaps late at night or early morning. It can sometimes help to leave small nourishing snacks at someone's bedside or by their chair as a visual prompt to eat.

Artificial feeding through a tube is not usually recommended as it has not been shown to improve wellbeing and it can cause distress and increase confusion. However using homemade fortified milkshakes or prescribed ready-made sip feeds offer the same nutritional value as the tube feed and are available in a 125ml compact bottle size. One bottle provides 300kcal and 12-20g protein which is the same as having a sandwich or a light meal.

**Remember good mouth care including regular brushing of teeth or cleaning of dentures remains essential.**

### **Where can I find more information?**

The following websites have fact sheets to download with further practical advice about supporting eating and drinking once at home:

#### **Alzheimer's Society (UK)**

Devon House

58 St Katharine's Way

London E1W 1LB

Helpline: 0300 222 1122

Fax: 020 7423 3501

Email: [enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk)

Website: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

#### **Age UK**

Age UK Headquarters

Tavis House

1-6 Tavistock Square

London

WC1H 9NA

Advice line Tel: 0800 169 6565

Website: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

## Sample menu

### Breakfast

Porridge made with full cream milk  
Scrambled eggs on toast (fortified with butter)  
Full English Breakfast  
Kippers with bread and butter  
Glass of fruit juice or a milky coffee  
Thick and creamy full fat yoghurt



### Mid-morning

Cheese or pate with crackers  
Milkshake/hot chocolate or coffee made with fortified milk

### Lunch

Sandwich with cheese/meat/tuna  
Sardines on toast  
Jacket potato with beans/cheese  
Quiche with salad and coleslaw  
Soup with added cream/cheese  
Omelette and salad  
& Thick and creamy full fat fruit yoghurt



butter

### Mid-afternoon

Milky drink  
Slice of cake with cream/ teacake with  
or margarine

### Evening meal

Spaghetti bolognese with grated cheese  
Fisherman's pie with peas  
Beef casserole or Roast Chicken  
with potatoes and vegetables  
Sandwich with cheese/ meat and piece  
of cake or yoghurt/ mousse



### Supper

Fortified Milky drink e.g. Horlicks, Ovaltine

## Creating a positive meal time environment

We develop an appetite through anticipation of a meal so setting the scene can help.

### Practical tips

- Smells of food and cooking can sometimes help stimulate an appetite and be a positive cue that it is time to eat.
- Freshen up before food with a visit to the bathroom and by washing hands.
- If possible involve people in setting the table –and remember to remove unwanted clutter from the table .
- Avoid distractions where possible such as TV or noisy radio. However sometimes quiet appropriate music may help with poor eating.
- Try to offer a choice of where to sit e.g. in the kitchen or dining area or in a favourite armchair
- Sitting and eating with someone helps to encourage eating.
- Describe foods and taste using clear, easy to understand language if a food isn't recognised e.g. "a delicious chicken casserole in a cream sauce" rather than "Chicken a la King".
- If someone is poorly sighted then colour contrast is important between the food and the plate; a pale coloured plate with a dark rim or a coloured plate can help to focus on the food on the plate. Clear fluids in a coloured beaker or coloured drinks such as juice/ squash in a clear beaker also helps someone to see their drink.
- Special lipped plates to help self feeding or adapted cutlery may be needed. Ask your OT/health professional for advice.



## What foods and drinks should I be encouraging?

- Some people eat better in the morning as more rested, but tire as the day goes on so a cooked breakfast might be a good choice with a milky coffee or milkshake.
- Soft, moist and nourishing foods like cottage pie or macaroni cheese require little cutting or chewing and can be eaten one handed with a fork or spoon.
- Taste changes and a reduction in smell as we age can affect our enjoyment of food. Sometimes sweeter foods can be more appetising. Using sweet sauces e.g. apple sauce with roast pork, sweet & sour beef or lemon chicken may help, as well as offering additional seasoning.
- Nourishing drinks such as the ones listed below are really important when appetite is low. Be mindful of drinks which contain caffeine (e.g. coffee, cola, energy drinks) if someone isn't sleeping well - decaffeinated alternatives will ensure sleep patterns aren't disturbed.
- For people with diabetes, encourage high calorie savoury snacks and milk based puddings and try not to add too much refined sugar. Check with your health professional.

### **Homemade fortified milkshake**

#### **Nourishing Drink Ideas**

Full cream milk, Milkshakes or yoghurt drinks (e.g. Frij, Nesquik, Yop, Skyr) Hot milky drinks (such as malted drinks e.g. Ovaltine, Horlicks, Carnation Malted Milk), Hot chocolate, Fruit juice, Smoothies, Milky (decaffeinated) coffee

You can make homemade milkshakes / milky coffee / malted drinks more nourishing by adding skimmed milk powder (2 tbs per glass/ mug) and a scoop of ice cream or double cream.

## What if sitting down for a meal is difficult?

If someone is restless or prefers walking around, provided there is no swallowing issues, it is possible to offer a balanced diet, just in a more portable form.



Finger foods such as hard cheese or vegetable sticks, sandwich triangles, cocktail sausages and malt loaf or tea-cake with butter may be simpler than using cutlery.



**Food fortification** If appetite is poor or weight loss a worry then try offering foods higher in calories and protein. Adding a little extra butter, cream, cheese, sugar or skimmed milk powder can improve the nutritional content of a food significantly.

### **Examples of Nourishing Snacks and Finger Foods**

| <u>Sweeter foods</u>                            | <u>Savoury foods</u>                                       | <u>Softer choices</u>                  |
|---|--|--|
| Bakewell tart                                   | Cheese and biscuits  | Crème caramel                          |
| Fruit pie                                       | Mini scotch eggs   | Custard pots                           |
| Cereal bar                                      | Chicken goujons  | Fruit fool                             |
| Chocolate bar                                   | Mini Cornish pasties                                       | Ice cream                              |
| Crumpet   | Pork pie   | Instant Whip/Delight                   |
| Custard tart                                    | Mini fish cakes  | Rice pudding                           |
| Danish pastry                                   | Crab sticks  | Tiramisu                               |
| Doughnut  | Mini sausage rolls   | Trifle                                 |
| Dried fruit                                     | Small sandwich   | Thick and Creamy                       |
| Flapjack  | (meat, cheese, fish, peanut butter, jam, chocolate spread) | yoghurt pot                            |
| Scone with butter and jam                       | Mini pizza bites   | Yoghurt in a tube                      |
| Sponge/Fruit cake                               | Boiled egg   | Mousse                                 |
| Teacake/ malt loaf or Hot cross bun with butter | Frittata slice   | Soup in a cup                          |
|   | Crisps   | Pâté or soft cheese on wholemeal bread |

### **Nutritional supplements**

There are a variety of nutritional supplements available on prescription if poor appetite and weight loss continue despite these dietary changes. Please discuss with the doctor or ask for a referral to a dietitian.