



Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Eating Well with Dementia

Not everyone with Dementia has the same symptoms. This is a guide for families and carers of people living with Dementia to help support them with their eating and drinking.

Mealtimes are a social activity, so a person may enjoy the experience and be more likely to eat with others present.

Mealtime/preparation tips:

- Try and provide a quiet calm atmosphere.
- Serve one small course at a time and keep it simple.
- Use plain plates, in a contrasting colour to the table.
- Try serving food on a side plate so as not to appear too large a portion.
- Use adapted cutlery/cups to help independence if required.



What to do if a person's appetite is reduced:

- Try offering 6 small snack meals instead of 3 main mealtimes, a little and often approach: Breakfast, Mid-Morning snack, Lunchtime, Mid-Afternoon snack, Evening Meal, Supper/Bedtime snack.
- Accept that behaviour around food may change. It doesn't matter if dessert is eaten before the main course or an odd combination of food is mixed together.
- Try a wide variety of foods, as tastes may change or revert back to how they used to be when younger.
- Offer 'finger foods' eg. sausage rolls, fish fingers, pizza, sandwiches, crackers and cheese.
- Include high calorie snacks, such as sandwiches, rice pudding/custard pots, full fat creamy yoghurts, scone with butter/cream and jam and a biscuit selection.
- Try where possible not to use low fat alternatives.
- Use full fat milk in drinks and offer cups of milk or milky drinks (hot chocolate, malted drinks etc) through the day.
- Milk can be fortified with dried milk powder 2-4 tablespoons whisked into 1 pint/500mls of full cream milk. This can be made up in advance and kept in the fridge for 24 hours.
- Add a tablespoon of milk powder to milky drinks or puddings to increase the calories.



- Add a tablespoon of milk powder to soup if creamy soups are enjoyed.
- Add extra cream, butter, full fat/fortified milk to foods to increase calories eg potatoes mashed with butter and full fat milk and grated cheese can also be added.

Other useful tips:

- Keep an eye on dental health and get regular check-ups. If wearing dentures make sure they don't become loose causing sore gums.
- Keep an eye out for any swallowing difficulties eg coughing after a drink. Please speak to your GP if this happens as a referral to SLT (Speech and Language Therapist) may be required.

Contact Numbers:

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please speak to the following Dorset County Hospital Staff:

Dietitian:

Dietitian's Department: 01305 254415

Useful Websites:

Dementia UK www.dementiauk.org

About this leaflet:

Author: Persephone Scotcher, Dietetic Assistant
 Written: May 2020
 Approved: July 2020
 Review date: July 2023
 Edition: v1

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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