

Dementia



WHAT IS DEMENTIA

Dementia is a group of symptoms associated with a decline in brain function. Dementia can bring about a number of symptoms including memory loss, mental agility, thinking speed and language. Dementia can also affect mood, movement and the ability to carry out daily activities.

HOW MANY PEOPLE DOES IT EFFECT?

There are around 850,000 people in the UK with dementia. The number of people with dementia is increasing, mainly because people are now living longer. It is estimated that by 2025, the number of people with dementia in the UK will have increased to around 1 million*.

*The Alzheimer's Society

HOW TO HELP WITH FOOD

Many people with dementia have problems with eating and drinking and can find social situations challenging.

Suggestions are listed below to help overcome some of the common behaviours associated with dementia.

FINGER FOODS

Finger foods are foods that can be eaten easily by hand. They play a really useful role for those who have difficulty with co-ordination and for those can't hold or don't recognise cutlery any longer.

If a resident finds it difficult to sit still at mealtime (wanders or paces around a lot), then finger foods could be placed into a bag or a chip cone so they can still eat as they move about. Finger foods helps maintain a resident's independence, this is important to preserve their dignity.

IF A RESIDENT...

Has difficulty cutting their food with cutlery

Has difficulty getting food onto cutlery

Is easily distracted in a busy dining room

Struggles to sit down during mealtimes, prefers to wander and pace

Chews food but doesn't swallow

Mixes their food together

Wants to eat desserts or sweets first

THEN TRY ONE OF THESE...

Help them cut up their food or alternatively, offer finger foods

A plate guard or lipped plate may help

Keep the dining room calm and quiet. Make sure they have been to the toilet before eating, that they have their glasses/hearing aids if they wear them and they are sitting comfortably

Keep the dining room calm and try to encourage they eat with other residents. If wandering persists then offer finger foods. If there is a time of day when the person will sit for longer periods, ensure that a good variety of foods is offered then

Contact a speech and language therapist. Use verbal cues to prompt the resident to chew and to swallow food

Ignore this as long as the food is eaten

Serve each meal component separately and keep desserts out of sight during the main course

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FINGER FOOD TIPS

- Wash the residents hands before and after meals or ensure that wipes are available to clean their hands
- Use foods that are robust and easy to pick up
- Serve foods in bite-size pieces
- If possible, make mini versions of the standard menu choice so that everyone can enjoy similar meals
- Choose foods that are moist but not too messy
- Serve foods at room temperature and allow hot foods to cool before serving
- Make sure finger foods look attractive and colourful
- Seek advice from a speech & language therapist if you are worried about swallowing difficulties
- Seek advice from a dietitian if you are concerned about weight loss

GENERAL MEALTIME TIPS

- Ensure the dining area is calm and quiet so residents can have relaxed mealtimes
- Keep the table settings simple, only use crockery and cutlery that is needed for the meal
- It's important that plates are clearly visible on the table. Try coloured plates or those with a coloured ring around the edge
- Make meals attractive and appetising as this can stimulate the appetite and the desire to eat
- Allow plenty of time to eat and assist if needed
- Food can act as a memory aid so try to find out food preferences from family members and friends
- Always check the temperature of food and drinks before serving, some people with dementia aren't able to tell if something is too hot to eat or drink

MINI YORKSHIRE PUDDING BEEF POTS

2" Fully Baked Yorkshire Puddings	8 each
Cooked Diced Beef	100g
Crops Cauliflower Cheese	50g
Large Onions	50g
Carrots	50g
Celery	50g
Wholegrain Mustard	20g

PREPARATION

1. Defrost Yorkshire puddings
2. Defrost and break beef into small pieces
3. Finely dice onions
4. Finely dice carrots
5. Finely dice celery

PROCESS

1. In a frying pan lightly cook carrot, onion and celery
2. Add beef and continue to cook for 2-3 mins
3. Add wholegrain mustard and mix well
4. Spoon into Yorkshire Puddings and top with a cauliflower cheese floret
5. Bake in oven at 180° until golden
6. Allow to cool slightly before serving

