



A guide for aged care workers and providers

Supporting the dining experience for people living with dementia

A supportive dining experience for a person living with dementia focuses on their needs, choices and preferences. People living with dementia have the right to choose:



who they sit with



where they sit



what they want to eat and drink



when they want to eat and drink

Support people living with dementia by:



Creating dementia-friendly dining experiences



Promoting choice and independence



Supporting good nutrition and hydration



Applying good food, nutrition and dining principles





Creating dementia-friendly dining experiences

- Get to know each person's preferences and update records when their preferences change. Remember, preferences can change day to day.
- Offer a range of food and drink choices.
- In your dining area consider:
 - accessibility
 - seating options
 - noise levels
 - table settings
 - lighting.
- Use contrasting colours for things like table surfaces, plates and bowls.
- Offer people support with eating and drinking as needed or recommended by a speech pathologist or occupational therapist.



Applying good food, nutrition and dining principles

- Communicate with a caring attitude. Remember, dementia affects communication. Consider how you can best engage with the person and their family to make sure you're providing mealtime support that is tailored to individual needs.
- Implement strategies that support safe swallowing while making sure they still have an enjoyable dining experience.
- Good oral health contributes to enjoyable meals.



Promoting choice and independence

- Involve people living with dementia in everyday tasks if they choose.
- Offer options to meet cultural and religious food and drink preferences.
- Support a range of preferences and needs by offering:
 - 24-hour food and drink options
 - buffet style meals
 - finger foods and snacks that can be easily eaten without utensils.
- Support people to be confident and independent by making sure recommended adaptive equipment is available and used.
- Encourage independence during meals by using strategies like visual and verbal cues. This may include:
 - demonstrating eating and drinking actions and behaviours
 - providing 'hand-under-hand' support.



Supporting good nutrition and hydration

- Provide a healthy balanced diet.
- Understand how dementia can affect eating and drinking.
- Understand what to do when a person is losing their appetite or declining to eat or drink.
- Look for signs of dehydration and offer a variety of drinks regularly.

**Food, nutrition
and dining hotline**

1800 844 044



Phone

1800 951 822



Web

agedcarequality.gov.au



Write

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
GPO Box 9819, in your capital city