

Caregiver Assistance News

"Caring for You - Caring for Others"

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



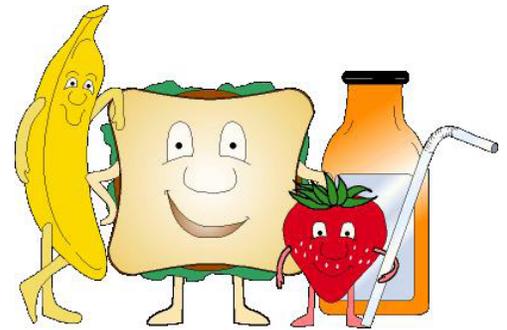
OCTOBER 2021

Activities of Daily Living - Feeding and Boosting Nutrition

Mealtimes are important because they provide a welcome break in the day. If it is not too distracting for the person in your care, meals can be eaten with friends or family. It is important that mealtimes be enjoyable so that the person will look forward to eating.

For best results at mealtime:

- Allow 30 to 45 minutes for eating.
- Avoid fussy meal presentation.
- Make sure all items are ready to eat and within reach.
- Provide a comfortable table and chair or other eating arrangement.
- Supply easy-to-hold eating utensils. To avoid cuts, throw out all chipped cups and plates.
- Reduce excess noise such as TV and radio.
- If the person's vision is poor, place the same foods in the same spot on the plate every time.



Eating Aids

- Spoons that swivel for those who have trouble with wrist movement.
- Use utensils with big grip surfaces to increase the gripping area so they can be lifted more easily.
- Plate guards or dishes with high sides that make it easier to scoop food onto a spoon.
- Rocker knives that can cut food with a rocking motion.
- Food-warming dishes for slow eaters.
- Mugs with two handles, a cover, a spout, and a suction base.

Feeding a Disabled Person

1. Name the food being offered.
2. If the person plays with food, limit the choices being offered.
3. Check food temperature often.
4. Be gentle with forks and spoons. (Use a rubber-tipped baby spoon.)
5. Feed at a steady pace, alternating food with drink.
6. Remove a spoon from the person's mouth very slowly. If the person clenches the spoon, let go of it and wait for the jaw to relax.
7. Give simple instructions such as "open your mouth," "move your tongue," "now swallow."
8. If the person spits food out, try feeding later.
9. If the person refuses food, provide a drink and try again in 10 minutes.

(continued on Page 2)

Feeding and Boosting Nutrition....continued from Page 1

10. Between meals, provide a nourishing snack, such as stewed fruit or finger foods. Supplement drinks can provide needed nourishment between meals, as a snack or supplement to add calories to the diet—not as a meal replacement.

Tip: Try using an adjustable ironing board for an over-the-bed table for activities or eating.

Boosting Food Intake When the Appetite Is Poor

- Offer more food at the time of day when the person is most hungry or less tired.
- To increase the appeal of food for those with decreased taste and smell, provide strong flavors.
- Use milk or cream instead of water in soups and cooked cereal.
- Add saturated fat by using butter, non-trans fat margarines, or olive oil on foods.
- Add non-fat dry-milk powder to foods like yogurt, mashed potatoes, gravy, and sauces.
- Tell the person to eat with his or her fingers if that is the only way to get the person to eat.
- Offer milk or fruit shakes.
- Offer puréed (finely ground) baby foods.

If the person in your care needs to swallow three or four times with each bite of food; coughs before, during, or after swallowing; pockets food in the mouth; or senses something caught or sticking in the back of the throat, he or she may have a condition called dysphagia. Difficulty swallowing must be evaluated to determine if it is a symptom of a treatable condition and to help the caregiver learn proper feeding techniques. Seek the advice of the doctor.

Eating Problems and Solutions

Drooling - use a straw if possible; help close the mouth with your hand. (However; sometimes, the use of a straw can cause choking if liquid touches the back of the mouth too quickly.)

Spitting out food - ask the doctor if the cause is moodiness or disease.

Too much swallowing or chewing - alternate hot and cold bites.

Difficulty chewing - change the diet to soft foods.

Difficulty swallowing - put foods through a blender or food mill; avoid thin liquids and instead serve thick liquids, such as milk shakes.

Poor scooping - use bowls instead of plates.

Difficulty cutting food - use a small pizza cutter or rolling knife.

Trouble moving food to the back of the mouth - change the food's thickness and demonstrate how to direct the food to the center of the mouth.

Too dry or too wet mouth - the doctor or pharmacist can advise of medication side effects.

Too easily distracted - pull down the shades and remove the distractions.

Difficulty in swallowing can cause food or liquids to be taken into the lungs, which can lead to pneumonia. Reduce the chance of food entering the lungs by keeping the person upright for at least 30 minutes after a meal.



Taking Care of Yourself

Get the Most for Your Food Budget

- Plan, plan, plan! Before you head to the grocery store, plan your meals for the week. Include meals like stews, casseroles, or stir-fry, which “stretch” expensive items into more portions.
- Buy in bulk - it is almost always cheaper to buy foods in bulk.
- Convenience costs...go back to the basics - convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut vegetables, and instant rice, oatmeal or grits will cost you more than if you were to make them from scratch.
- Easy on your wallet - certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. Try beans for a less expensive protein food. For vegetables, buy carrots, greens or potatoes.
- Cook once... eat all week! Prepare a large batch of favorite recipes on your day off (double or triple the recipe). Freeze in individual containers. Use them throughout the week and you won't have to spend money on take-out meals.
- Eating out - restaurants can be expensive. Save money by getting the early bird special, going out for lunch instead of dinner, or looking for “2 for 1” deals. Order water instead of other beverages, which add to the bill.



Source: MyPlate 10 Tips

Memory Care - Sweets

People with dementia often seem to have a sweet tooth. Ice cream and other treats can be used to encourage them to finish either a meal or other activities. Place acceptable treats where they can be found easily and restricted items out of sight.



Free Telephone Caregiver Support Group

Thursday, October 21st • 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

If you are interested in this free support, please contact Vicki Woyan at the AAA7 for more details.

Call: 1-800-582-7277, ext. 215 • E-Mail: info@aaa7.org



Eating Tips for the Middle Stage of Alzheimer's

- Put only a few items on a plate and use a plain white plate. Serve the meal one course at a time to ensure the dessert does not come first, leaving no room or interest for healthier items.
- Be on the lookout for changes in eating behavior.
- Check temperature of food often. Name the food being offered.
- Provide finger foods if needed—a person may eat more independently and will have improved nutrition.
- When needed, cut foods into bite-size portions.
- Watch use of utensils. Don't put a knife on the table if the person can no longer use it properly.
- Watch for choking or problems swallowing. Consult a doctor or a speech or occupational therapist if problems arise.
- Choose strong colors to help utensils stand out on the table.



*Some content in this publication is excerpted from *The Comfort of Home: Caregivers Series*. It is for informational use and not health advice. It is not meant to replace medical care but to supplement it. The publisher assumes no liability with respect to the accuracy, completeness or application of information presented, or the reader's misunderstanding of the text.*



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Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs.

The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at info@aaa7.org.