

Feeding in Dementia

Guidance

Some people have problems communicating so may communicate through their behaviour. For example, they may hold food in their mouth to indicate they don't like food. Offer a choice of food, and use prompts and pictures to help.

Oral hygiene and regular mouth checks are important to ensure the mouth is not painful and that dentures are fit properly, as this could affect eating.

Overeating

- Give the person something to do
- Divide the original portion in two, and offer the second later on if requested
- Fill most of the plate with vegetables
- Leave bite-size healthy food e.g. fruit within reach
- Offer a drink instead of more food

Encourage

- Eat with others as this gives guidance and encouragement
- Let the person eat where they are most comfortable
- Use contrasting coloured plates and cutlery
- Give assistance to choose meals, with snacks offered inbetween meals
- Try finger foods such as: sandwiches, pizza and toast
- Provide foods with high amounts of calories

Enhance

Ways of enhancing flavour to increase stimulation;

- Add herbs and spices
- Add a little honey, sugar or jam to food
- Sweet sauces or chutneys can be served with savoury dinners
- Eating unusual combinations is unlikely to cause harm

Assistance

- Don't rush meals, try to phase out assistance where possible
- Offer an empty spoon or cup to prompt a swallow
- Give a teaspoon for eating meals so less amounts of food are taken at a time
- Model behaviours and give verbal prompts
- Talk about the smell and taste
- If overloading the mouth, place a hand over their hand to prevent further mouthfuls
- If feeding, ensure the food has been swallowed