

### 1. Know me and what, how and when I like to eat and drink

- Find out what I like to eat and drink but remember - my tastes might change over time, so ask me regularly.
- Find out what portion size I prefer and when I like to eat my main meal, or if I prefer frequent, smaller meals throughout my wakened day.
- Find out how my favourite food and drink choices can be adapted to meet my current needs. For example, made sweeter or more savoury; the texture adjusted so I can eat safely; what would make it look more appetising to me if the texture has to be modified (for example, moulds, scoops, cutters).
- Involve my family and named carers to ensure you fully understand my eating and drinking needs and habits.
- Use the information you gather to get me the support I need.



### 2. Communicate my food and fluid needs

- Liaise with catering/kitchen staff to make sure my special dietary requirements are catered for.
- If I can't tell you what I want to eat and drink, be creative. For example, 'show and tell' what is on the menus and hold taster sessions, recording my response (facial expressions, gestures) to foods and fluids.
- Make sure my plan of care reflects my likes and dislikes and what texture my food and fluid should be, using the national descriptors.
- Involve the right people at the right time to get me the help I need, for example a speech and language therapist (SLT), a dietitian, an occupational therapist.
- The food that I eat and drink should help me maintain my health and wellbeing. For example, by reducing the risk of constipation, dehydration, skin breakdown.



### 3. What help do I need to eat and drink independently

- What adaptations do I need to help me to eat and drink independently? For example, adapted cutlery, crockery, seating support.
- Give me time to eat but make sure my hot food stays at the right temperature to keep it appetising. For example, use heated plates, consider smaller portions with the option of further helpings.
- Give me time to chew and swallow and give me your full attention when you are helping me.
- Make sure salt and pepper, other condiments and small jugs of water or other fluids are within reach, so I can help myself or you can help me.
- If I am eating and drinking on the move, make sure you know how much I am eating and drinking to help you make decisions about me. For example, what help do I need if I am losing weight or not eating enough.

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## Food and drink – what matters to me

### Five simple things that can make a big difference

### 4. Create an environment that promotes the dining experience

- Find out what makes the best dining experience for me and what I don't like, including who I enjoy sitting beside and who I would rather not sit beside.
- Be aware of the noise levels and any distractions, adjust them as appropriate to help me focus on eating and drinking.
- Make sure that I have been offered and/or used the toilet before I sit down to eat and that I have washed my hands.
- Set the table for me the way I would like it set, no matter where I decide to take my meal.
- If you are helping me to eat and drink, sit beside me and take your time. If I am unable to talk to you, observe my facial expressions and gestures to know when I am ready for more or have had enough.



### 5. What you need to do to make sure I eat well

- Know what my MUST score is and what it is telling you – take appropriate actions. For example, fortifying my food to add calories.
- Eating something is better than nothing and I may not prefer the ideal healthy diet. Respect my preferences but continue to offer me healthy choices.
- If I prefer not to sit for meals give me finger foods that I can carry around with me while I eat, or give me a named container I can snack from.
- Make sure food and fluid is available all day so I can eat and drink when I want to. For example, access to fluid stations and snack boxes.
- When preparing me for my meals, if required, make sure I have the correct glasses on and hearing aids in, as this will help me enjoy and take part in my dining experience.





5. Know what you need to do to make sure I eat well

4. Create an environment that promotes the dining experience

3. Know what help I need to be able to eat and drink independently

2. Communicate my food and fluid needs

1. Know me and what, how and when I like to eat and drink

## Food and drink – what matters to me

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## Introduction

We all enjoy being able to decide what, when and how we eat and drink – it's easy to take it for granted.

However, for people who use a care service and rely on others to provide their meals, being able to have choice and make decisions that truly reflect personal preferences can be challenging. It is vital that people living in care homes eat and drink well, and it's really important that they have the choice, control and independent decision making that enables them to enjoy what they eat and drink.

It doesn't have to be complicated or difficult. This leaflet and fold-out poster show five simple things that can make a big difference to how well a person eats and drinks.

Opposite, you can see the five simple things you can do. Open up this leaflet to see the poster of hints and tips to help you work with people using your service to achieve the positive experiences and results that can make a big difference for everyone.

