

## **Nutrition and Hydration**

### **A staff guide to assist well being**

#### **Your Health is important to you, to your families and to NHS Highland**

We understand that this is a very stressful time for people, and alongside this many of you are working long hours in a physically and emotionally demanding role. You may well be working in a different way, in a different location, and you may well be home schooling or caring for families too.

Given this, I would like to extend my sincere thanks for the levels of commitment and dedication you show each and every day you come to work.

We all have a responsibility to stay fit and healthy and that includes eating and drinking well. The following advice includes a few suggestions to help you do that during these challenging times. Staying fit and well needs to be a priority too.

It is important to dispel any myths around so-called “super foods” which might help you fight the virus: there are no such products. Managers are encouraged to reinforce self-care for staff, to keep workers well and to feel supported.

If you remain hydrated you will prevent adverse symptoms such as:

- Dizziness, leading to trips and falls
- Headaches, causing irritability with colleagues and residents
- Urinary tract infections, which may require a GP appointment, a prescription from community pharmacy and possibly time off sick
- Fatigue, which may impact on your ability to care for residents or each other.
- Confusion can lead to drug errors or lead you to make mistakes e.g. with hand hygiene

#### **Planning ahead**

- Take in your own, clearly marked flask/ thermal mug or cup and keep it at work to use by you alone. Use a paper towel (bring in your own) to dry it thoroughly after washing- rather than leaving it drip drying on the draining board.
- Set an alarm on your mobile phone or get colleagues to remind you/others to take a drink every hour- even if you don't feel thirsty (feeling thirsty indicates that you are already dehydrated) Water is free and very accessible to all.
- If you are able to sit and take a drink and snack with a resident (social distance if you can) this will also help each of you to stay hydrated and connected.
- You may want to avoid using microwaves, pans and other cooking equipment, which are used for residents' food. If you can rely on cold food, it may be safer for all: and can be just as nutritious as hot food.

- Make up your own lunch the night before, rather than rushing in the morning. Take sandwiches, wraps, rolls wrapped up in foil or sandwich bags to be disposed of after you've eaten. This avoids the need to wash up at work or take sandwich boxes home to wash.
- Wholemeal, high fibre foods will keep you fuller and will release energy over a longer period for you. Vary what you eat, so you don't get bored or start to miss out on a good mix of nutrients.
- Include sources of protein such as pulses, peanut butter, cheese, eggs, fish, and meat and if you make soups, make sure you include lentils, split peas or barley to make them more nutritious.
- Take wrapped snacks with you to have during the day e.g. packets of crisps, wrapped biscuits, cake or nuts.
- Include some fruit and/ a carton of fruit juice in your working day.

### **At home**

- Try not to rely on high fat, snack or convenience foods as this will lead to other health problems.
- Batch cook meals for you to freeze and quickly heat up when you get home from work if possible
- Have a store cupboard (not stockpile) of: tinned fruit; fish e.g. tuna, sardines, mackerel; nuts, starchy carbohydrates e.g. rice, pasta, noodles, potatoes; crackers or oatcakes.
- Ready meals, including pizza have their uses, so consider keeping a couple in your freezer as these may be helpful when you can't easily get to the shops.

### **Further support and advice**

Please contact Evelyn Newman on [evelyn.newman@nhs.net](mailto:evelyn.newman@nhs.net) or Tel 07870 868475

[www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com) fact sheets