

Facts for Families: Food and nutrition

Is your loved one eating enough? Too much? Is his or her diet balanced? What about personal choice?

We aim to strike a balance between what is important to the people we support, such as favourite puddings and meal time routines, and what is important for them, like fruit and veg and foods that support specific health needs. It isn't always easy – we've all been tempted by a cream bun – but eating well can prevent health problems and can improve existing conditions.

Dimensions supports people to:

- eat regularly through the day (little and often)
- choose less refined high-sugar foods and drinks
- choose more wholegrain cereals, nuts, beans, lentils, fruit and vegetables
- include protein at each meal (and each snack)
- eat a wide variety of foods
- include oily fish (omega 3 fatty acids)
- maintain a healthy weight if possible
- maintain an adequate fluid intake
- keep within recommended limits when drinking alcohol
- exercise regularly.



We expect our support staff to remember some simple rules:

- food should be nutrient rich, not calorie rich, so avoid huge portion sizes
- do not use our nutritional guidance as a replacement for specific medical advice given by health professionals; Dimensions' advice is designed to work alongside a person's health plan
- introduce new foods slowly and be inventive with meals – food should look appealing if we expect people to eat it
- be aware of health conditions the person you support has and medication they take, as this could affect their eating habits, the way food tastes, digestion, swallowing etc.
- do not make huge changes to somebody's diet all at once. You may get some adverse reactions, both emotionally and physically
- just because one member of staff says that the person you support does not like a particular food, don't give up on it. Try to be more creative and make it more appealing.

We provide all members of staff with a nutrition guide, written by a food and nutrition professional. If you would like to see this, please ask your relative's locality manager.

Proving life can get better