

Brakes guide to Dementia



What is dementia?

Dementia is a group of symptoms associated with a decline in brain function. Dementia can bring about various symptoms including memory loss, and reduced mental agility, thinking speed and language. Dementia can also affect mood, movement and the ability to carry out daily activities.

Dine with dignity

Dementia can also cause problems with eating and drinking and some people can find social situations challenging. Suggestions are listed below to help overcome some of the common behaviours associated with dementia.

If someone ...

Then try one of these...

Has difficulty cutting their food with cutlery	Help them cut up their food or alternatively, offer finger foods
Has difficulty getting food onto cutlery	A plate guard or lipped plate may help
Is easily distracted in a busy dining room	Keep the dining room calm & quiet. Make sure they have been to the toilet before eating, that they have their glasses/hearing aids if needed and they are sitting comfortably
Struggles to sit down during mealtimes, prefers to wander and pace	Try to encourage they eat with others. Offer finger foods. Aim for a time of day when the person will sit for longer periods of time
Chews food but doesn't swallow it	Contact a speech & language therapist. Use verbal cues to prompt people to chew and to swallow food



How many people does it effect?

There are around 900,000 people in the UK with dementia and this number is increasing, mainly because people are now living longer. It's predicted that 1.6 million people will be living with dementia by 2040*.

*The Alzheimer's Society

General mealtime tips

- Ensure the dining area is calm and quiet so people can relax
- Use simple table settings, only use crockery and cutlery that is needed
- It's important that plates are clearly visible on the table. Try coloured plates or those with a coloured ring around the edge
- Make meals attractive, this can stimulate the appetite and the desire to eat
- Allow plenty of time to eat and assist if needed
- Food can act as a memory aid so try to find out food preferences from family members and friends
- Always check the temperature of food and drinks before serving, some people with dementia aren't able to tell if something is too hot to eat or drink



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Finger foods - hints and tips

Finger foods are foods that can be eaten easily by hand. They play a really useful role for those who have difficulty with co-ordination and for those that can't hold or don't recognise cutlery any longer. If someone finds it difficult to sit still at mealtimes (wanders or paces around a lot), then finger foods could be placed into a bag or a chip cone so they can still eat as they move about. Finger foods help to maintain independence, this is important to preserve dignity.

- Wash hands before and after meals or ensure that wipes are available to clean their hands with
- Use foods that are robust and easy to pick up
- Serve food in bite-size pieces
- If possible, make mini versions of the standard menu choice so that everyone can enjoy similar meals
- Choose foods that are moist but not too messy
- Serve foods at room temperature and allow hot foods to cool before serving
- Make sure finger foods look attractive and colourful
- Seek advice from a speech & language therapist if you are worried about swallowing difficulties
- Seek advice from a dietitian if you are concerned about weight loss



Recipe Idea:

Mini Yorkshire Pudding Beef Pots

Serves 10

Ingredients

2" Fully Baked Yorkshire Puddings F 33344	8each	Carrots C 450693	50g
British Red Tractor Cooked Diced Beef F 111785	100g	Celery C 10228	50g
Crops Cauliflower Cheese F 111085	50g	Wholegrain Mustard A 88932	20g
Large Onions C 10291	50g		

Preparation

- Defrost Yorkshire puddings
- Defrost & break beef into small pieces
- Finely dice onions
- Finely dice carrots
- Finely dice celery

Method

1. In a frying pan lightly cook carrot, onion & celery
2. Add beef & continue to cook for 2-3mins
3. Add wholegrain mustard & mix well
4. Spoon into Yorkshire Puddings & top with a cauliflower cheese floret
5. Bake in oven at 180°C until golden
6. Allow to cool slightly before serving

