

Nutrition and dementia



Just over half of residents in aged care facilities suffer from dementia and residents in aged care are more likely to have moderate to severe dementia.¹

Why is nutrition important?

Being well nourished is associated with better quality of life, reduced risk of falls and fractures, reduced risk of pressure injuries and improved healing time.²

However malnutrition is common among people with dementia as the associated memory loss, confusion, and perceptive and sensory losses all affect a person's ability to prepare, eat and enjoy food.³

Weight loss often occurs before dementia is diagnosed and increases as the disease progresses.⁴

It is important to address weight loss and malnutrition as they have been associated with dementia severity as well as more rapid development of cognitive impairment and mortality.⁴

Factors contributing to poor nutrition include:

- Reduced appetite
- Increased activity
- Disruption of eating and feeding behaviours
- Swallowing difficulties.



How can you improve nutrition?

An International Review of available research made the following recommendations regarding nutrition for people with dementia:⁴



All homes and hospitals that care for people with dementia should develop and implement plans to optimise and monitor nutritional status.



Attend to food variety and meal time environment with:

- Familiar foods
- Smaller dining areas to reduce confusion
- Unhurried meal times that are free from distraction
- Feeding assistance and encouragement.



Nutritional advice and food fortification should be tried initially.



The use of oral nutritional supplements (ONS) should not be delayed for those with malnutrition and those at risk who fail to respond.

"Evidence to support the efficiency, safety and tolerability of ONS is particularly strong and this may be the most reliable means of restoring nutritional balance."⁴

Nestlé Health Science solutions to help improve nutrition



SUSTAGEN® Hospital Formula Active Neutral Flavour

- Nutritionally complete supplement
- Provides 225 kcal and 13.8g protein (25% energy) per serve
- Neutral flavour so it can be added to sweet and savoury food and fluids
- Mixes well with various foods.



RESOURCE® 2.0 + Fibre

- Nutritionally complete, ready to drink supplement
- 400 kcal, 5g fibre and 18g protein (18% energy) per 200mL serve
- 5 flavours limit taste fatigue and improve compliance
- Perfect for med pass program
- Fibre promotes healthy bowel function.



RESOURCE® 2.0

- Nutritionally complete, ready to drink supplement
- 475 kcal and 19.7g protein (17% energy) per 237mL serve
- Perfect for med pass program which is shown to assist with compliance and positive patient outcomes.



RESOURCE® Fruit Flavoured Beverage

- Fruit flavoured ready to drink supplement
- An alternative to milk based drinks
- 250 kcal and 9g protein (15% energy) per 237mL serve
- Assisting with compliance for residents who prefer a non-milky alternative.

References: 1. AIHW. Dementia in Australia 2012 <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=10737422943> 2. Gaskill et al. Australasian J Ageing 2008;27:189-194
3. Shatenstein B et al. J Nutr Health Aging 2008;12(7): 461-469 4. Prince M. et al. Nutrition and Dementia 2014. Alzheimer's Disease International.
London <https://www.alz.co.uk/sites/default/files/pdfs/nutrition-and-dementia.pdf>

Nutritional supplements can only be of assistance where dietary intake is inadequate. Please seek advice on your individual dietary needs from an Accredited Practising Dietitian or your healthcare professional. SUSTAGEN® Hospital Formula Active is a formulated meal replacement and cannot be used as a total diet replacement. Consume as part of a varied and balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. RESOURCE® 2.0 + Fibre, RESOURCE® 2.0 and RESOURCE® Fruit Flavoured Beverage are food for special medical purposes specifically formulated for medical conditions where nutritional needs cannot be met through diet modification alone. Must use under medical supervision.

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