Eating: checklist for positive experiences

Good practice for quality dementia care. An A-Z of strategies, checklists and tools

☐ Sense of occasion
☐ Active policy to make meals pleasant and enjoyable
☐ Home-like environment without institutional practices
☐ Individual food and social preferences met
☐ Individual eating and nutritional issues addressed
☐ Cultural differences in eating and mealtimes satisfied
☐ Verbal cues to encourage eating and keep independence
☐ Praise for appropriate mealtimes responses
☐ Mealtime social interaction encouraged
☐ Opportunities for involvement in growing or buying food
☐ Opportunities to help in food preparation
☐ Opportunities to help with clearing and washing up
☐ Past eating experiences taken into account
☐ Changing needs accepted and met
☐ Personalised kitchen to encourage ‘ownership’ of the area
☐ Small decentralised dining areas, next to kitchens
☐ Well-lit dining areas
☐ Minimal noise and distraction
☐ Colour and colour contrasts in décor to encourage eating and interaction
☐ Flexible use of furniture for people’s changing needs
☐ Visible toilet close to dining area, and easy to get to
☐ Dining areas with view of outdoor areas
☐ Finger food that does not need utensils

Further information


For those with eating difficulties
☐ Verbal cues to prompt eating
☐ One course served at a time to encourage focus
☐ Reminders to swallow

For related information, see the following checklists
- Dining room essentials
- Eating, dining areas and kitchens
- Eating: dos and don’ts for assisted eating
- Eating in late stage dementia
- Finger food