



MEALS ON WHEELS
NATIONAL CONFERENCE
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HILTON · BRISBANE



Dementia care in the community

Meals on Wheels

Dementia

- Dementia can happen to anyone
- Most people with dementia are older (does not affect all elderly people)
- Younger people can also suffer from dementia
- Over time becomes very debilitating required care and support

Dementia is complex

- Alzheimer's disease – most common form and accounts for between 50% to 70%
- Vascular dementia – this is the broad term for dementia problems of circulation of blood to the brain
- Frontotemporal Lobar Degeneration (FTLD) degeneration in one or both of the frontal or temporal lobes of the brain
- Parkinson disease – may develop dementia in the late stages of the disease
- Alcohol related dementia – caused by too much alcohol
- Huntington's disease – inherited, degenerative brain disease that affect the mind and body. Dementia occurs in the majority of cases

Diagnosis is important

- Rule out other conditions that can be mistaken for dementia, such as depression, stress, pain or infection
- Enable treatments to be discussed
- Enable planning for the future to start as soon as possible, while the person affected can still actively participate
- Allow support to be arranged to assist both the person with dementia and their family

Symptoms

- Progressive and frequent memory loss
- Confusion
- Personality changes and behaviour changes
- Apathy and withdrawal
- Loss of ability to perform everyday tasks
- **Forgetting your car keys is not a sign of dementia**

Nutritional concerns

- Malnutrition due to poor intake
- Dehydration from lack of fluids
- Decline in particular nutrients as only certain foods are eaten eg. toast and cups of tea
- Become weaker and unable to prepare foods
- Swallowing difficulties – leads onto poor nutrition intake
- Some may develop overeating or insatiable appetite - obesity

Living in the community

- Forget to eat
- Purchase inappropriate foods
- Diminished cooking skills
- Self-neglect
- Unable to identify foods
- Food are left in refrigerators and spoil and can be eaten – food safety
- Danger in food preparation – leaving on cooking equipment

Two main areas

- People cannot recognise food – lost the capacity to remember meal times and then what to do at that point without some support
 - Meals on Wheels can become a support for these clients
- People do not know or remember how to use eating utensils
 - Finger foods

First area



- Meals on wheels play a supporting role in delivering meals
- Social contact
- Providing assistance with heating the meal
- Notice when meals are not eaten
- Eating queue at the time of arrival
- Provide additional meal support with more than one meal provided eg - breakfast

Second area - Finger foods

- Finger foods are foods which can be picked up by the fingers
- Finger foods are useful to clients who
 - Find it difficult to use eating utensils (Parkinson disease)
 - Forgotten how to use eating utensils (Dementia)
 - Forgotten how to eat or what time to eat
 - Stroke (reduce movement in hand)



Finger foods

- Thick cut vegetables
- Pieces of fruit
- Pieces of cheese
- Sandwiches
- Rolls with fillings
- Pies/pastry type foods
- Pieces of meat/fish pieces
- Breakfast bars
- Spring rolls/rice
- Wraps



Examples of MOW finger food meals



Example of ready made finger foods



Loss of appetite – grazing snacks

- Leave snacks on the table for grazing through out the day
- Meals on Wheels could provide grazing packs full of cut up pieces of food, biscuits which could be left out



Feeding people with dementia

- Serve one course at a time and remove other distracting items from the table
- Ensure the crockery is plain and is a contrasting colour to a plain tablecloth
- Allow plenty of time to eat
- Keep noise or activity low
- Serve food that is familiar to the person
- Eat with a person with dementia



Be prepared for change

- Many eating problems of dementia are temporary and will change as the person's abilities deteriorate
- As people decline the intake of food does decline and additional nutrition strategies are required to assist.
 - High energy and protein snacks
 - High energy and protein drink



Support is essential

- National help line
- Support groups
- Education resources
- Carer support groups
- Day centres
- Respite care – home or in facility
- Home care and MOW
- High and low-level aged care facilities

Thank you - questions

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- www.nutcat.com
- Visit www.nutcat.com.au
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