

# Tips for eating and drinking in dementia



# Tips for eating and drinking

This booklet has some **tips** for **eating and drinking**.

These tips may make **eating and drinking more comfortable**.

**Dementia** can **affect eating and drinking** in many different ways.



# What can be different?

Eating and drinking may **feel different.**

Food might **look different.**

Food might **smell different.**



## What can be different?

You might **not feel** the **food in your mouth**.

You might **like new foods**.

You might **not like some foods** anymore.



## What can be different?

You might **not feel hungry.**

You might **not feel thirsty.**

You might **not want to eat at meal times.**

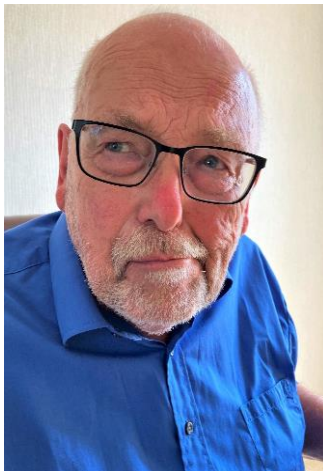


## What can be different?

It might be **difficult to chew** food.

It might be **difficult to swallow** food.

It might be **difficult to swallow** drinks.



## Things to try

**Softer** foods are **easier**.

You can **blend** your **soup**.

You can **add sauce** or **gravy** to your **meal**.

You can **add custard** or **cream** to your **dessert**.



# Things to try

You can try **finger foods** if cutlery is difficult.





## Tips for mealtimes

Eat your meals in a **quiet place**.

Sit with **good back support**.

Sit with your **feet on the ground**.

**Stay sitting** for a while **after eating**.



# Tips for mealtimes

Wear your **glasses**.

Wear your **dentures**.

Wear your **hearing aids**.



## Tips for mealtimes

You can **help set the table**.

You can **help prepare the meal**.

Use a **cup** that you **like**.

Use a **plate** that you **like**.



## Tips for mealtimes

Take **small sips** of drink.

Take **small bites** of food.

**Swallow** one bite **first**. Then take another bite.



## Tips for mealtimes

**Chew** every mouthful well.

Have **sips of water** between bites.

**Clean your teeth** after a meal.



# Foods that might be easier



**Soup**



**Pasta with  
lots of sauce**



**Flaky fish in  
sauce**



**Mince and  
tatties**



**Shepherd's  
pie**



**Macaroni  
cheese**

# Foods that might be easier



**Mashed  
potatoes**



**Cooked  
vegetables**



**Mushy peas**



**Baked  
beans**



**Tinned fruit**



**Rice  
pudding**

# Foods that might be easier



**Yoghurt**



**Mousse**



**Jaffa cakes**



**Smooth porridge**



**Custard**

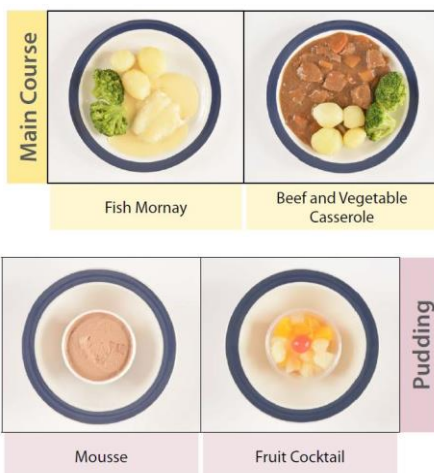


**Biscuits dunked in tea**



# Tips for the people that serve you food & drinks

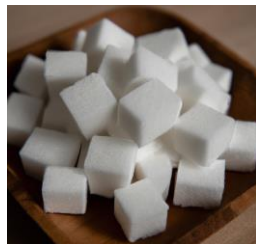
- Offer choices, if possible.
- A picture menu can be helpful.
- Consider the **person's preferred times** to eat. This might not be during a scheduled mealtime.
- **Reduce distractions** in the environment.



# Tips for the people that serve you food & drinks

- Make sure the person is **comfortable**.
- Make sure the person can **see and smell** the food and drinks.
- **Describe** the food and drink.

What **flavours** can we expect?



# Tips for the people that serve you food & drinks

- Offer a **gentle reminder to swallow** if the person becomes distracted.
- **Asking a question** may **prompt a swallow**, as the mouth needs cleared before answering.



# Tips for the people that serve you food & drinks

- Gently bring the **person's focus back to the meal** if needed.
- Give **reassurance and encouragement.**



# Tips for the people that serve you food & drinks

- Eating and Drinking can also be affected by other factors. These include:
  - **Medications.**
  - **Oral Health.**
  - Condition of **teeth** or **dentures.**
  - Other **health conditions**, for example **breathing problems** or **infections.**



*If there are further concerns around eating, drinking and swallowing, please get in touch with your GP or Health Care Professional for a referral to Speech and Language Therapy.*

This booklet was made by the Aberdeen City Adult Speech and Language Therapy service, with support by the NHS Grampian Speech and Language Therapy Dementia Working Group (2023).

All photographs used with permission.

Some pictures of food and drink items were generated with the assistance of AI.