

Dementia & Nutrition:

Recommendations for Activity Professionals and Recreation Therapists

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Excerpts from the new book, *Dietary Concerns and Recommendations for Alzheimer's and Dementia. A Guide for Long Term Care Facilities and Special Care Units.*

Plan and prepare all cooking events. Have all your products available and set up prior to beginning your program. Keep all sharps out of sight and locked up. You should have a finished sample of what you will be making. It is recommended that all cooking programs be offered in the afternoon, as you have more time in the afternoon and are not restricted by lunch hour. Offer 2 exercise programs a day, which will increase appetite, aid in digestion and increase desire for fluids. Before every activity, clean resident's hands with wipes (if possible, take the resident to the sink and wash hands) and offer scented lotions such as coconut. This is a nice way to Segway into a program and offer stimulation to the resident.

- Provide fluids at every activity.
- Offer fluids after all exercise programs.
- Invite to all food related activities and provide supervision.
- Offer end of day tea socials. Serve tea on fancy china and china cups.
- Use colored cups, vs. white cups.
- Offer a weekly social. Play Cheers theme music. Serve non-alcoholic beverages such as Pina Coladas.
- Invite residents to assist with lunch set up and meal clean up.
- Offer homemade milkshakes and prepare with the residents.
- Use bread machines and bake bread often.
- Watch your sharps. During the activity program, keep knives in your pocket at all times or out of sight. It only takes a second for an accident to happen.
- Use aromatherapy machines and electric candle warmers while setting up for programs.
- Play soft music before and after programs.
- Incorporate more cooking programs, using: Portable ovens, Otis Spunk Meyer Cookie Ovens, Blenders and Microwaves Oven.
- If you have the use of a kitchen, prepare small meals with the resident in the kitchens.
- Bring in recipe books for the residents to look at. Ask them to share their favorite recipes.
- Begin a recipe book of their favorite recipes.
- Offer snacks at all special events.
- Food related word games and trivia games.
- Food Bingo
- Invite to watch cooking shows on television or video, especially the 30 minute shows.
- Ask the resident to identify items such as squash and apples (many kinds) and their uses.

- Plan special events, breakfast buffets, pancake breakfasts, pizza parties, luaus, barbecues, elegant dining, cultural events, monthly parties and birthday parties.
- Plan special meals for religious holidays.
- At club meetings serve nutritious snacks.
- Offer hydration stations that are attractive, such as clear pitchers with floating fruit. Clear cups with lids at bedside. Eliminate Styrofoam pitchers and cups at bedside because they cannot do this three-step process of picking up the pitcher and pouring liquid into the cup.
- Offer nutritious snacks during reminisce and relaxation videos.
- Provide short lunch trips to restaurants such as McDonalds, Cafes and Diners.
- Offer tea samplers and unique condiments.
- Display different grocery items and have them reminisce about them. Uses and prices.
- String popcorn and cranberries for the birds to feed on outdoors. Drape over bushes.
- Make potpourri out of dried fruit.
- Roll pinecones in peanut butter and birdseed.

- Dry fruit and sample. Can also make art projects out of dried fruit.
- String cheerios and fancy macaroni.
- Make macaroni art. Place on construction paper and glue down.
- Discuss all the ways peanut butter can be used. Provide crackers, apples and bread.
- Shuck corn and snap beans.
- Offer seasonal beverages and food such as eggnog and peppermint ice cream.
- Make homemade lemonade and tea.
- Make popcorn and offer different seasonings for the popcorn. Let them season with their own individual portions.
- Fold dishtowels and napkins.
- Make easy salads, potato, coleslaw, three bean, fruit salad and corn salads.
- Share cooking stories found in reminisce magazines.
- Peel potatoes and make mashed potatoes.
- Prepare gelatin and fast setting puddings.
- Let them dry dishes, sort utensils and silverware.
- Provide history of different foods with a sampler.
- Have tea with the administrator or guest.
- Cinnamon crafts. Lots of ideas for cinnamon sticks.
- Have theme days such as Western Day.
- Have word games associated with themes; Vegetables, Breakfast items, farm stands.
- Have residents wipe the place mats clean.
- Make seasonal murals. For November draw a cornucopia. Let residents color vegetable items. Another idea is a mural about a farmer's market that has pictures the resident can color of food items.
- Make simple recipes with the residents, such as fruit salad, pigs in a blanket, Cookies and icing, ice cream pies, apple pies, etc. Offer recipes that are theme related such as Apple pies in September.