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Care Home

# NUTRITION & HYDRATION GUIDE






Over 1 million older people in England are estimated to be malnourished or at risk of malnutrition[1]

# THE CHALLENGE

Supporting residents with good nutrition and hydration is vital but challenging. Catering teams must provide nutritious, appealing and often personalised meals within tight budgets, all while managing residents' naturally decreasing appetites.

Many factors can lead to a reduced food or fluid intake. Although this guide doesn't cover those causes (see page 6 for resources), it offers simple, practical ways to manage the challenges and create meals that truly nourish residents every day.

## Tip 1 - Add supportive & fortified ingredients

Using products which are fortified can be an effective way to boost the nutritional value of dishes for residents at risk of malnutrition.

While some ingredients in packaged products may be considered less healthy, our view is that, when used in small amounts, it's better for residents to eat or drink something they enjoy than to risk becoming malnourished.

### OUR CHEF'S PRODUCT SUGGESTIONS

★ **Millac Gold Double**
Enriched with vitamin D, this versatile cream can be added to sweet and savoury dishes, perfect for whipping, cooking and pouring.

★ **Get More Vits Drinks**
Often with age comes a loss of taste. Flavoured water makes hydration more enjoyable, and these vitamin-packed drinks are ideal for a hydration station or adding to jellies.

★ **Lakeland Skimmed Milk Powder**
With 55 calories and 5.5g of protein in a tablespoon, this milk powder can be used to fortify liquid milk then added to sauces, drinks and desserts to increase the nutrients.

★ **Major Vitamin D Gravy Granules**
Add these fortified granules to stews, soups, sauces, and stocks to boost vitamins and flavour. Use stock to cook rice or potatoes to enhance taste and increase resident enjoyment.

# HEALING HERBS & SPICES

We believe in nourishing people through food and promoting long-term health naturally, where possible. Herbs and spices have long been valued for healing properties. For older adults, two key benefits include:

**Anti-inflammatory effects:** Chronic inflammation is linked to conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and arthritis. Anti-inflammatory foods can help ease discomfort, making mealtimes more enjoyable and encouraging better intake.

**Antioxidant support:** Antioxidants reduce oxidative stress caused by free radicals. This helps protect brain and heart health and supports the immune system.

Ginger and green tea are also anti-inflammatory and antioxidant.

## TURMERIC



Turmeric contains an active compound called curcumin, which is known to have anti-inflammatory properties.

**Adding to dishes:** Include in smoothies, soups, rice, curry dishes, cubed potatoes and salad dressings.

**TOP TIP:** *Pair with black pepper to aid absorption. 1/4 tsp of ground turmeric with a pinch of black pepper increases curcumin absorption by 2000%.*

## CINNAMON



Cinnamon contains large amounts of antioxidants and is linked to lowering blood sugar and helping manage diabetes.

**Adding to dishes:** Stir into pancake mix, porridge and smoothies. Add to chilli, meat marinades and tagines.

**TOP TIP:** *The smell of cinnamon helps stimulate appetite, try stirring into drinks and topping dishes in front of residents.*

## ROSEMARY



Rosemary contains polyphenols that provide antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits. It's also linked to mental clarity, mood support and antimicrobial effects that may help fight infections.

**Adding to dishes:** Infuse stocks, oils and cream, add to roasted veg and bread. Make rosemary tea or mocktails.

**TOP TIP:** *Try growing your own and involving residents in planting and watering.*

*It's important to choose herbs and spices which are safe for elderly people, we recommend consulting your medical care team before changing any recipes.*



# WHAT'S IN SEASON

*Add to sandwiches, salads, juices or use as crudities*

## Tip 2 - Increase hydration through water dense foods

For residents who may be reluctant to drink, increasing their intake of fruits and vegetables can be a helpful way to support hydration Using in-season British produce not only reduces costs but also offers better flavour and lowers food miles.

### SPRING & SUMMER

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cucumber | Asparagus | Blackcurrants |
| Tomatoes | Broccoli | Raspberries |
| Lettuce | Carrots | Strawberries |
| Courgettes | Swede | Rhubarb |
| Cauliflower | Cherries | Peas |

**Seasonal ideas:**

- Make homemade ice lollies with vitamin squash and Summer fruits
- Add iced tea to a kilner jar with leftover fruit, a perfect alternative to hot drinks in warmer months
- Snacking on raw fruit and veg helps keep in the nutrients



*High in water, finely chop and use as a base for pasta dishes and stews*

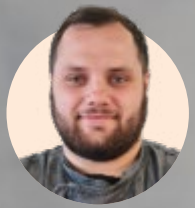
### AUTUMN & WINTER

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Celery | Plums | Leeks |
| Kale | Brussels Sprouts | Parsnips |
| Apples | Carrots | Pumpkin |
| Blackberries | Cauliflower | Beetroot |
| Pears | Red Cabbage | |

**Seasonal ideas:**

- Stew fresh fruit and add to a delicious homemade crumble
- Add an assortment of vegetables to a roasting tin with oil, herbs and spices for an alternative side dish
- Try our seasonal soup recipes on our online Recipe Hub





# JOE'S JUICE RECIPES

A study by UWL on residents' cold drink preferences found water was chosen the least, with various juice flavours appearing most popular[2]. Our development chef, Joe Oliver, created some fantastic juice recipes to help support residents.

## GREEN HULK JUICE

**Ingredients:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 500g Kale | High in vitamin C, A & K |
| ½ Celery | High in potassium & vitamin K |
| 4kg Green Apple | High in fibre & vitamin C |
| 1 thumb Fresh Ginger | Improves digestion |
| 1.5 Lemons (juiced) | High in vitamin C |
| Honey, to taste | Anti-inflammatory |

**1 PTN = 330ML**

*This nutrient dense juice supports digestion, energy and metabolism. A great option to have at breakfast to help daily bodily functions.*

## IMMUNE BOOSTING JUICE

**Ingredients:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 20 Juicing Oranges | High in vitamin C & folate |
| 500g Carrots | High in fibre & antioxidants |
| 1.5 Lemons (juiced) | High in vitamin C |
| 2 thumbs Fresh Ginger | Improves digestion |
| 75g Fresh Turmeric | Anti-inflammatory |
| Honey, to taste | Anti-inflammatory |
| Sparkling water | Hydrating |

**1 PTN = 330ML**

*This anti-inflammatory, antioxidant juice helps to support immune function and the body's natural defences.*

## CRIMSON COOLER JUICE

**Ingredients:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 20 Juicing Oranges | High in vitamin C & folate |
| 1.25kg Beetroot (peeled) | High in antioxidants |
| 500ml Coconut Water | High in electrolytes |
| 200ml Sparkling Water | Hydrating |

**1 PTN = 330ML**

*This juice is high in nitrates which help improve blood flow. Beetroot supports both heart and lung functions.*

# EVENT IDEAS



## Tip 3 - Celebrate food and drink

We know that simply talking about food can help to stimulate appetite, and sharing mealtimes with others can lift mood, reduce feelings of isolation and encourage residents to eat more. Creating social dining experiences can make a meaningful difference to enjoyment and intake.

People eat up to 48% more in social settings, and older adults consume more calories and nutrients when meals are shared.[3]



### AFTERNOON TEA

Whether you're celebrating an occasion or creating a nostalgic event, have lots of hot and cold drinks available, enrich the sandwiches and bring in activities.

### CHEESE & WINE NIGHT

Create a special evening with appetising cheeseboards with fruit and non alcoholic drinks, play some music and create an inviting atmosphere.

### PANCAKE STATION

Make up pancakes and invite residents to add their own toppings and encourage seconds as not to overload the plate which can be off putting.

### MONTHLY BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Celebrate everyone in the home with a birthday that month with a buffet as selecting our own food can increase consumption. Talk about the party in the day to increase appetites.

### SUMMER GARDEN EVENTS

Being outdoors promotes a wide range of health benefits, with fresh air and a short walk often helping to stimulate appetite. Try a BBQ event with an ice cream station, or planting fruit, veg and herbs for residents to be involved in the food.

### GAMES AFTERNOON

Create a social event with lots of snacks available, you could host a food and drink themed quiz to promote hunger. Guess the crisp flavour is a fun idea!





## Tip 4 - Consider cooking and preparation methods

1. **Don't overcook** – you can lose some of the vital nutrients in food if overcooked. For example, keeping vegetables on to boil for too long.
2. **Think about adding not taking away** – to boost nutrients in dishes add nuts, seeds, pulses and grains into staple meals. Offer a side salad and see which produce residents enjoy.
3. **Finger foods** – sometimes cutlery can be a barrier, try providing food that can be picked up. Think mini pizzas, dippy eggs and soldiers and crumpets with healthy toppings.
4. **Use pre-made mixes** – pre made mixes can support consistent, quality dishes that appeal to residents. Try the time saving Country Range pastry mix, which only needs water added, use for pies, tarts and sausage rolls.

*Resources*

*For information on the causes and symptoms of malnutrition and dehydration: BDA Care Home Digest and www.bda.uk.com/resource/malnutrition*

*For further tips and advice: www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk*

*[1] Malnutrition Task Force, 2025*

*[2] UWL, 2019*

*[3] The Journal of Population Ageing, 2024*

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**WE'RE HERE TO HELP. CHAT WITH OUR EXPERT TEAM TO SEE HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU.**

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Milestone Business Park, Oslo Road, **Hull** HU7 0YN

Green Lea Mills, Cross Green Road, Dalton, **Huddersfield** HD5 9XX

Ribble Valley Enterprise Park, North Road, Barrow, **Clitheroe** BB7 9QZ

**York** 01904 655 368 **Hull** 01482 833 336 **Huddersfield** 01484 536 688 **Clitheroe** 01254 828 330

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