Country Range

Created for the makers

A guide to *Catering for Dementia*

Catering for *Dementia*

According to The Alzheimer's Society, it is estimated that around 70% of care home residents have dementia or severe memory problems.

Residents living with dementia can experience eating and drinking difficulties, meaning that they can be at higher risk of malnutrition and/or dehydration. Eating and drinking difficulties can include:

- **Being unable to communicate their likes and dislikes**
- **Changes in food preferences and eating habits**
- **Changes in taste and smell**
- **Forgetting to eat, eating too much or forgetting they have eaten**
- **Loss of ability to eat and/or drink independently**
- **Refusing food or appearing to refuse food**
- **Decreased awareness of thirst**
- **Decreased appetite**
- **Swallowing difficulties (dysphagia)**

You can find all of the information from this guide, plus more recipe inspiration at **countryrange.co.uk** or by scanning this QR code

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Scan the QR code or visit **countryrange.co.uk/about/stockists/** to find your nearest wholesaler.

The British Dietetic Association (BDA) have worked with the National Association of Care Catering (NACC) to develop the Care Home Digest, which is the first menu planning and food service guidelines for care homes for older adults. The Care Home Digest is intended to support residential and nursing care homes to provide high quality food and drink services for residents in their care.

The guidelines are comprehensive and cover all aspects of menu planning and nutritional guidance for older adults living in residential homes. We highly recommend sharing them with your team if you haven't done so already.

We have worked with IDDSI trainer Andy Cullum to break down some of the guidance to help you when catering for residents who are living with dementia and/or dysphagia. Examples include how you can adapt a three-course menu to meet the needs of residents with these conditions. We have focussed on providing guidance on cutlery-free dining options that are nutritious and practical whilst still being delicious and visually appealing. This guide is in no way exhaustive, but we hope it gives you some practical solutions to ensure that your residents are able to enjoy the food that you prepare in ways that are adapted to some of their needs.

You can download the full guidelines by scanning this QR code or visiting **bda.uk.com.**

There is some guidance for modifying meals for residents with dysphagia within this guide. For more information about this, you can download our free guide to the IDDSI framework by scanning this QR code:

You can download the full BDA Care Home Digest at bda.uk.com

About

Andy Cullum

Andy Cullum delivers IDDSI training to people on modified meals as he believes for meals to be served safely, the chefs must have an understanding of dysphagia. He has a wealth of experience and knowledge and supports various groups within the care sector with the goal of improving the foods they prepare and serve in care home settings.

Andy's journey started when a family member was in a care home, and he was taken back by the poor standards of the meals that were being served and wanted to make a difference. Since then, he has supported the development of hundreds of chefs through his collaborative approach of blended learning. It has resulted in embedding not only knowledge and craft skills but also supported with group initiatives that have helped change the terminology of certain foods within the care sector.

Andy is an independent trainer and his hard work and dedication in the sector have recently been recognised with a prestigious Public Sector Catering Training & Apprenticeship Award.

You can connect with Andy on LinkedIn here: **www.linkedin.com/in/andrew-cullum-13917a79/**
or via his website **www.theiddsiguy.com/**

Recipe ideas and methods are not endorsed by IDDSI. The methods have been created by using the IDDSI framework. The IDDSI guy Ltd is a trading name only and has no affiliation with IDDSI.

The company is a training provider for dysphagia modified food and drink, if you have questions for IDDSI or wish to contact IDDSI please contact iddsi.org.

Tips for catering for changes in eating habits

Dementia can lead to changes in food and fluid intake and the choices that the resident makes can be different to what was 'typical' or 'usual' for them. It is important to try to find out what the resident's current food and fluid preferences are, especially if the resident is unable to communicate their likes and dislikes.

Carers who know the resident are likely to be able to help with this. Family and friends may also be able to advise, although they may be less aware of what the resident's most recent preferences are, especially if the person who is living with dementia has been a resident for a long time.

This information should also be located in the care plan and diet notification document.

RESIDENTS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA SHOULD BE FULLY SUPPORTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

CHOICE OF FOOD AND DRINK

- Some residents living with dementia may prefer sweeter foods. Try adding small amounts of honey or sugar to savoury food or small amounts of syrup, jam or honey to puddings to increase their sweetness.
- Support and enable unusual food choices or combinations where these are preferred e.g., if a main course is only eaten if sprinkled with sugar, or if eating dessert before a main meal enables a resident to eat a main meal too rather than serving in the traditional order when only the dessert might be eaten.
- Encourage food and drinks at times when the person seems to want to eat and drink.

MENU

- "Show Plates", visual menus, and/ or picture cards with photos of the meals, desserts, snacks and drinks available can be used instead of or as well as written menus to help residents living with dementia to make choices about what they want to eat and drink.
- Give short and simple verbal descriptions of meals, snacks and drinks and give residents time to communicate their choice. Be aware that people living with dementia may forget or struggle to understand what has been said to them, so choices may need to be repeated or presented in a different way.
- Encourage discussion about the meal or snack before and during meal and snack times.

ASSISTANCE

- Encourage independence by supporting residents living with dementia to help themselves, for example at breakfast serve toast in a toast rack, with butter and marmalade in small dishes that people can help themselves to.
- Specialist feeding aids may help promote independence for some residents e.g., nonslip mats, adapted cutlery, deep lipped plates, large handled mugs or plain brightly coloured plates on a contrasting colour tablecloth.
- Enabling residents to eat and enjoy their meal should be our priority. Don't worry if mealtimes become slightly messy and consider clothing protection for residents who might need and accept this. Good table manners and not making a mess are not essential, but eating is.

Encourage discussion about upcoming meals and snacks

STIMULATION

Stimulation and activity can promote alertness and hunger cues prior to a mealtime. Ideas to support this can include:

- Suitable physical exercise e.g., standing up and sitting down, armchair exercises, balloon tennis, parachute games.
- Cognitive stimulation before mealtimes e.g., food-based activities or other ideas such as arts and crafts, music, debates/ discussions.

SPECIAL DIETS

- If a resident needs their food to be cut up or served in a different way to make it easier for them to eat it, try to do this in front of them.
- When preparing food, put yourself in your resident's shoes and always treat them with the dignity that you would want for yourself.
- Be aware of the resident's pace of eating (encourage eating one mouthful at a time) and their eating preferences.
- Ensure there is enough time available to support the resident to eat at their own pace.
- If the resident has difficulty using their hands or has difficulty recognising food/ remembering how to eat, use gentle verbal prompts or 'hand over hand' support with or without cutlery to enable them to eat ('hand over hand' means the carer supports the individual resident's hand, and guides the resident's hand to their mouth).
- If a resident eats quickly or tends to put large amounts of food into their mouth, encourage them to slow down by talking to them, cutting food into smaller pieces, providing smaller cutlery and supervising them at mealtimes.

FINGER FOODS

Residents living with dementia may find it more difficult to remember how to eat with cutlery and may also find it more difficult to remain seated to eat a whole meal. "Finger foods" may be helpful for residents who struggle to stay seated to complete a meal, who walk with purpose and/or those who have difficulty recognising or using cutlery.

Finger foods are foods that are easy to pick up and can be eaten with the hands. They can be any type of food and should not be limited to typical snack or 'buffet' style foods. Ensure that a finger food meal or snack is comparable to the regular menu options - a meal based on finger food options should be as nutritious as regular meals and snacks.

Present finger foods in a way that is accessible to residents and may tempt them to eat.

The Care Home Digest includes extensive examples of appropriate finger foods. You can download this by scanning this QR code.

What to include on your menu

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THE FOLLOWING PAGES INCLUDE SOME EXAMPLES OF THE WAYS IN WHICH POPULAR MENU OPTIONS CAN BE ADAPTED INTO FINGER FOODS AND MODIFIED FOR PEOPLE FOR WHOM MODIFIED TEXTURE FOOD MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE.

Starters

PRAWN COCKTAIL

An ever-popular dish and also a great way to encourage residents to eat a less commonly served source of protein, this traditional starter may also prompt memories of dining out with loved ones. You can make it cutlery-free whilst still including all of the ingredients, by turning it into a wrap Wraps can be created for IDDSI levels 5 (Minced and Moist) and 4 (Puréed) giving diners who have these textures the same starter option as others, whilst keeping the appearance appealing and recognisable.

We used Country Range North Atlantic Prawns and Thousand Island Dressing.

How to modify the wrap

PRAWN FILLING

Here, we have created the filling for Level 5 (minced and moist) which has more texture, and for Level 4 which is a smooth puree. The lettuce layer and wrap can both be created for Level 4 and then used for both levels.

Level 5 Minced and Moist - Put your cooked Country Range Prawns and Country Range Thousand Island Dressing in a blender and blitz until the mixture passes the IDDSI Level 5 test – the pieces of food should be no bigger than 4mm x 4mm in size and pass through the prongs of a fork when pressed. There should be no separation of liquid and solid.

Level 4 Puréed – Blend the mixture as above, add full fat milk and skimmed milk powder, if you wish to fortify further, and blend until the mixture is smooth and not sticky. Add food thickener until the mixture passes the IDDSI Level 4 test – it should drop off a spoon easily, leaving very little residue on the spoon. Pass through a sieve and check seasoning. When testing food is the correct consistency, always use the full guidance in the IDDSI framework.

WRAP

Remove the crusts from half a loaf of Country Range White Sliced Bread and blend with milk. Keep adding full fat milk gradually to remove the stickiness of the bread. Add seasoning and skimmed milk powder, if you wish to fortify. Add food thickener until the mixture passes the IDDSI Level 4 testing methods.

To create the wrap, cover a metal tray with cling film and sprinkle with Country Range Gravy Powder. This creates the toasted effect on the outside of the wrap! Add a thin layer of the bread mix using a hot pallet knife and put it in the freezer. Do not allow this to fully freeze, you want it to be firm but not frozen.

To assemble the wrap, you now need to spread a layer of lettuce mix over the firm bread mix and put it back in the freezer. Once the lettuce layer is firm but not frozen, add the layer of prawn mix (either IDDSI level 4 or 5 depending on the needs of the resident) and repeat the process. You are now ready to roll the wrap into a cylinder. Wrap the cylinder in cling film and put back into the freezer to set before cutting into one inch slices using a hot knife.

See the Country Range Guide to the IDDSI Framework for more information.

LETTUCE

Put a bag of salad leaves (remove any red leaves as this will turn your mixture red), one peeled cucumber, a dash of lemon juice, a teaspoon of olive oil and a teaspoon of vinegar in a blender and blend to a paste. I also add brown sugar as a grinding agent, so add a teaspoon of this whilst blending. Add skimmed milk powder and full fat milk and blend until smooth and not sticky. Check the consistency and add food thickener until the mixture passes the IDDSI Level 4 test. Pass through a sieve and season to taste.

Main Course

ROAST DINNER

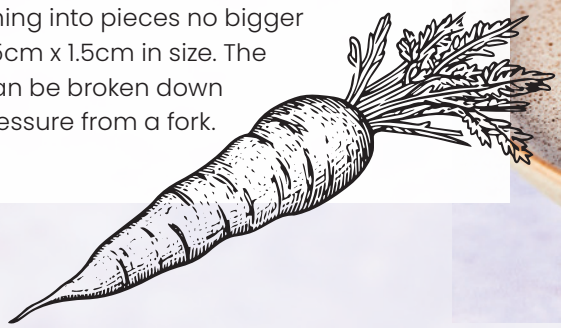
TOP TIP

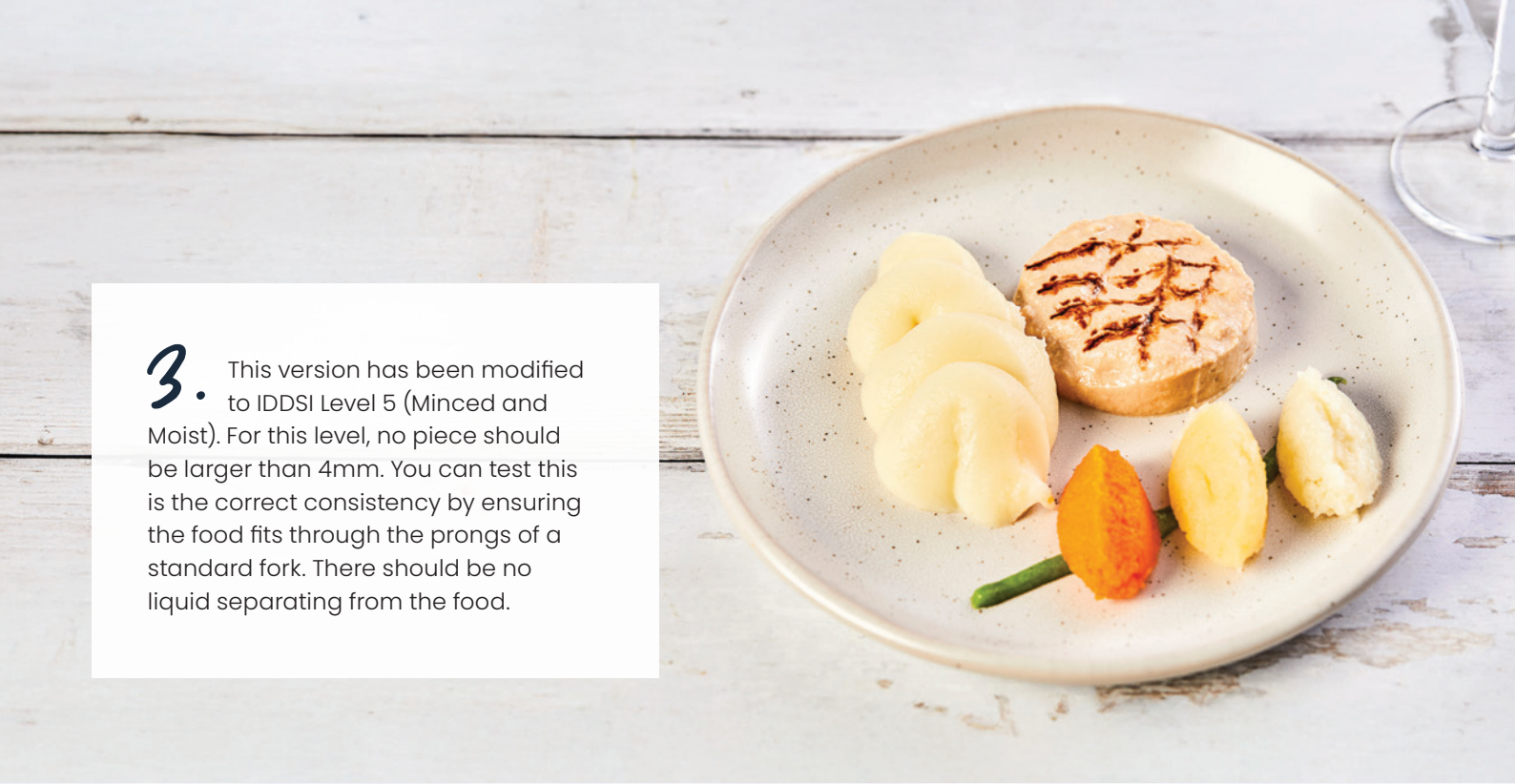
Poach, braise or stew your meat gently in stock to make it soft and tender. This makes it suitable for all levels.

Most care home menus will serve a roast dinner on a Sunday and it's also a popular option when catering for a special occasion. It's pretty simple to adapt your roast dinner to support residents living with dementia to make it easier to eat without cutlery. We also included some guidance here on how the same meal can be adapted for those with dysphagia.

1. This roast chicken dinner has been purposely presented in this way, with everything cut into strips and with no gravy included. This can be eaten without cutlery and is also suitable for IDDSI Level 7 (easy to chew). Of course gravy can be added for diners who eat with cutlery but it's usually easier for those who eat with their hands to serve the meal without.

2. Here, we have modified the same meal for IDDSI Level 6 (Soft and Bite-Sized) by cutting everything into pieces no bigger than 1.5cm x 1.5cm in size. The food can be broken down with pressure from a fork.





3. This version has been modified to IDDSI Level 5 (Minced and Moist). For this level, no piece should be larger than 4mm. You can test this is the correct consistency by ensuring the food fits through the prongs of a standard fork. There should be no liquid separating from the food.

4. This has been puréed to IDDSI Level 4 (Puréed), which should be completely smooth and lump free but able to hold its own weight. Use the spoon 'drop test' to ensure it is at the correct consistency.

5. This idea incorporates all of the elements of a roast dinner into a handheld snack. It should enable residents living with dementia who walk around, to still eat a nutritious meal despite not sitting down for that meal. Mini Yorkshire puddings stuffed with pureed or minced and moist roast dinner elements, can also make great finger foods. The consistency of the fillings suggested will help them to stick inside the puddings and therefore not fall out easily.

Fakeaway Friday

There doesn't always have to be a big reason to have a celebratory meal. How about simply looking forward to a treat every week, like fish and chips or a tasty burger? And we can enable residents living with dementia to enjoy the same treats, even if they need to be presented in a different way.

Here are some simple adjustments you could make to fakeaway menu favourites to make sure they are more accessible and cutlery-free.

FISH AND CHIPS

This favourite meal can be turned into finger food by creating fish goujons with dipping pots filled with mushy peas and tartare sauce.

Make chips that are easier to chew by shaping steamed potato and brushing with gravy browning for colour.

To make the dips accessible for all, purée your mushy peas and pass through a sieve to remove any problematic ingredients and puree to level 4. Follow the same process for your tartare sauce.

CURRY

Here, we used the ready to use Country Range Tikka Masala Sauce which is free of all 14 allergens, making it a quick and easy way to create an inclusive meal for your residents.

- Poach your chicken to make it easy to chew and easy to modify its texture if you need to.
- Cut your chicken and naan into strips to make them easy to pick up.
- Serve the sauce in a dipping pot.
- You can add the chicken to the sauce and puree it for Level 4 if required.

BURGERS FOR EVERYBODY

Burgers are naturally cutlery-free so they're a good place to start when thinking about creating an accessible meal. There are some modifications that can be made to ensure that burger night is nutritious and inclusive for all diners. We shrank the burgers to make them finger food for those who struggle to use cutlery or who want to walk around while eating.

To make mini burgers:

- Use sliced bread cut into circles to make the mini burger buns.
- To make your burger patties, slowly braise your mince with onion and garlic to make it tender and easy to chew.
- Add puréed burger relish and lettuce which will hold the burger together.

TOP TIP

Use Level 4 puréed lettuce (see page 9) and burger relish in all of your burgers to add flavour and nutrients. These textures will also help to hold the burger together. Don't forget to always test using the IDDSI Framework when modifying food texture for those with dysphagia.

LEVEL 4 PURÉED

Food should have a smooth texture with no lumps and can be eaten with a spoon.

Use the IDDSI Fork Drip Test - the food should sit in a mound or pile above the fork and should not dollop or drip continuously through the fork prongs. The puree should also hold its shape on a spoon and fall off fairly easily if the spoon is tilted or flicked. It should not be firm or sticky. This may also need to be sieved, depending on the machine that you are using.

LEVEL 5 MINCED AND MOIST

Food should be soft and moist, but with no liquid leaking or dripping from the food.

Use the IDDSI Fork test - food should be no larger than 4mm x 4mm x 15mm which is approximately the gap between the prongs of a standard dinner fork. Food should not be firm or sticky and should hold its shape on a spoon, falling off fairly easily if the spoon is tilted or lightly flicked.

LEVEL 7 EASY TO CHEW

Food should be able to be cut or broken apart with the side of a fork or spoon.

Use the IDDSI Fork Pressure Test by pressing down on the food until your thumbnail blanches to white, then lift to see that the food is completely squashed and does not regain its shape.

TRIFLE POTS

Trifle is a wonderfully versatile dessert which evokes a sense of nostalgia in diners. It's great to serve individually in mini pots and you can modify the layers to make them suitable for IDDSI Levels 4 & 5.

Scan the QR code for a method to make Level 4 Puréed sponge

Desserts and Snacks

Individual dessert pots are easy to serve and enable residents to eat at their own pace and walk around with them.

DELIGHTS FOR ALL

Another nostalgic sweet treat is a classic mousse. We worked with Country Range Delight Mixes to make them suitable for IDDSI Level 4 (Puréed). You could serve them like this for all residents from those having Level 4 to Level 7, you only need to make one big batch.

1. Use milk to make up your Country Range Delight Mix. Before adding the Delight Mix, add food thickener to the milk and blend until it is Level 2 consistency.
2. Add the Delight Mix as per packet instructions and blend until it is at a consistency where it just drops clean off a spoon.
3. Test using the IDDSI Framework to ensure it is the correct consistency.

BANANA MILKSHAKE

This is a great zero-waste recipe as it uses the banana skins, which are also full of nutrition.

1. Lightly poach two banana skins.
2. Blend one banana and the poached peel with milk until smooth.
3. Add skimmed milk powder to give it a creamy taste.
4. Pass through a sieve.

You can add ice cream if you wish and you may need to thicken it depending on the level of drink required.

TOP TIP

Purée your dips or toppings to a Level 4 consistency. This will help them to stay on the crudité whilst being carried around.

SAVOURY SNACK

Dips are a great idea for adding flavour and texture to your snacks. Include a range of vegetables and for something different, the Signature by Country Range Potato Sidewinders are great for scooping and holding a lot of dip.

Salsa, Ranch and Honey Mustard dips

Tuna Topping

Hummus Topping

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