



## A fact sheet for aged care residents

# Food and dining – your choices matter



### Eating food that you like is important for your health and wellbeing.

The food and dining experience offered by your aged care provider should be safe, enjoyable, respectful and based on what you like.

If this is not your experience, it is okay for you to raise your concerns with the provider.

If you feel uncomfortable talking to your provider about your concerns, or if you have already tried without an acceptable outcome, contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and we will help you.

Contact us by:

**Phone** Food, Nutrition and Dining  
Hotline 1800 844 044  
(free call), 9am – 5pm AEDT,  
Monday to Friday

**Online** [agedcarequality.gov.au](https://agedcarequality.gov.au)

**Email** [info@agedcarequality.gov.au](mailto:info@agedcarequality.gov.au)

**Mail** Aged Care Quality and Safety  
Commission GPO Box 9819,  
in your capital city

### How can the Commission help you?

When you contact the Commission about concerns you have with your food and dining experience at an aged care service, we will:

- listen to you to understand your concerns
- speak to your provider
- support you and your provider to know your rights and responsibilities
- make sure your provider understands their responsibilities
- help your provider to agree to a plan of action that meets your expectations
- check back in with you to find out if things have improved.

Where required, the Commission can take formal action with your aged care provider to make sure that they improve the quality and standard of service.



## What changes can you expect?

After your concerns are made known to your provider, the changes you should see include:

- staff talking with you to understand your choices and preparing food that you are happy with
- staff helping you to do as much as you can by yourself during meal times
- staff making sure you get the nutrition you need to stay healthy
- staff respecting your cultural, religious and dietary needs and preferences
- a more enjoyable dining experience.

## If you want to try talking to your provider first

If you feel comfortable, you can raise your concerns with your aged care provider. This would help them to understand your views and preferences. You can also ask a family member or advocate to speak on your behalf.

A conversation with your service can often lead to changes being made quickly to meet your food and dining preferences. Your provider can work to make your food and dining experience better if they know your preferences.

Before raising your concerns, you might like to consider the following advice:

- It is helpful if your concerns **reach the right person**. You can ask to speak to the staff responsible for food and dining.
- If possible, provide **specific examples** of what you would like changed. Let them know what food you do and do not like. Talk about meals you enjoyed and meals that did not meet your expectations. You might even have favourite recipes that you can give to them to try.
- You can complete the '[My food and dining preferences form](#)' and give it to your provider. This is a good way to ensure that your provider knows your preferences, which you can update at any time.
- **Understand your rights**. The Charter of Aged Care Rights is a good place to start. You can view the Charter at [www.agedcarequality.gov.au/older-australians/your-rights/charter-aged-care-rights](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/older-australians/your-rights/charter-aged-care-rights) or ask your provider to give you a printed copy.
- **Don't give up** if you don't feel heard. You do not need to raise your concerns alone. The Commission can help you at any time. Advocacy support is also available.



### My food and dining preferences form

[www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resource-library/my-food-and-dining-preferences-form](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resource-library/my-food-and-dining-preferences-form)

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You can seek support or advice from free, independent **advocacy services**. These services can provide support to older people and their representatives on issues related to Commonwealth-funded aged care services.

The **Older Person's Advocacy Network (OPAN) Support Line** can provide free and independent advice on **1800 700 600** or visit [open.org.au](http://open.org.au).

## For more information

You can find further information about food and dining experiences in aged care on the Commission's website: [www.agedcarequality.gov.au/older-australians/health-wellbeing/food-and-nutrition](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/older-australians/health-wellbeing/food-and-nutrition)

You can find further information to help you raise your concerns by reading OPAN's Self-advocacy toolkit: [www.open.org.au/toolkit](http://www.open.org.au/toolkit)



**You have the right to choose what, where and when you eat and drink.**

**You have the right to raise your concerns about your food and dining experiences.**

**Support is available to help you raise your concerns.**

Phone the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's Food, Nutrition and Dining Hotline on **1800 844 044** (free call), 9am – 5pm AEDT, Monday to Friday if you wish to speak with professionals about issues, ideas or concerns in relation to an enjoyable food, nutrition and dining experience in an aged care service. Alternatively, you can contact the Commission's general enquiries line on **1800 951 822** (free call).

 **1800 844 044**

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