



A guide for families, friends and other representatives

# Supporting the dining experience for people living with dementia in residential aged care

The aged care provider of the person you care for should be making sure the food, nutrition and dining they provide is:



safe



enjoyable



respectful



based on what the person likes and wants

You can support the person you care for by doing the following:



Advocate for their needs, choices and preferences



Be there



Share a story



Know the signs



## Advocate for their needs, choices and preferences

When you advocate for someone, you represent their needs, choices and preferences. You take their side and support them. You can do this by working closely with their care team, including chefs and health professionals.

You can support their food, nutrition and dining experience by:

- asking questions to find out about their meals and dining experience
- asking if they are experiencing changes in taste and smell (let the care team know of any changes)
- talking to the provider to understand how food, nutrition and dining is going for the person.



## Be there

Visit the person you care for during mealtimes when you can. It may help to give them support and encouragement to eat and drink if they want or need it.



## Know the signs

Keep an eye out for changes in the person's:

- food, drink and dining preferences and habits
- appetite
- weight (losing or gaining a lot)
- taste and smell
- behaviour or mood
- teeth and mouth health
- eating, drinking and swallowing and if they're finding it difficult.

**If you notice any changes, let their care team know.**



## Share a story

Share a story with workers about the person's:

- favourite or familiar food
- normal eating habits including time and place
- preferences for mealtimes such as lighting, music or background noise.

**Remember, what they like may change and continue to change over time.**

## Frequently asked questions

### 1. Can I give feedback about the food and drinks the person I care for is getting?

It's important to talk to the provider and members of the person's care team about the person's needs, choices and preferences. Your feedback can help inform the person's care and improve their mealtimes, which will support their health, wellbeing and quality of life.

### 2. Who do I talk to if I have concerns about the person's food, nutrition and dining?

If you've already spoken to the provider, or you don't feel comfortable talking to them about your concerns, you can contact the Commission on the Food, Nutrition and Dining Hotline **1800 844 044**.

For more information about the hotline and what to expect when you call, read the [Do you have questions, concerns or complaints about your food, nutrition and dining in aged care?](#) factsheet.



**Food, nutrition  
and dining hotline**  
1800 844 044



**Phone**  
1800 951 822



**Web**  
[agedcarequality.gov.au](http://agedcarequality.gov.au)



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