Making Meals and Mealtime Meaningful – Nutrition and Dementia

A Video Guide for Nurses and Certified Nursing Assistants in Long-Term Care Facilities

Facilitator’s Guide
Good nutrition is crucial to our well-being. When your residents have dementia, it can be difficult for them to get the nutrients they need and to enjoy meals in the same way they might have in the past.

Up to half of all long-term care residents suffer from some form of dementia, such as Alzheimer’s disease. As caregivers dementia poses unique challenges. Chief among them is making sure residents with dementia eat well, drink enough and achieve their nutritional goals. Caregivers can help by understanding residents’ capabilities and limitations, then using that knowledge to help provide individualized care and good nutrition.

Caring for your residents is your top priority. Residents and their families trust you to help protect them and their health. Understanding the impact of dementia on resident nutrition will help you to be proactive in preventing and managing nutritional and fluid deficiencies. Above all, being educated and informed can help you make sure your residents receive the best possible care.
This facilitator’s guide will help you plan for and conduct sessions to help ensure that you maximize the materials in this video. Consider your facility’s protocol for addressing the nutritional needs of residents with dementia, and consider topics to engage in meaningful discussion regarding dementia as well as nutritional and fluid deficiencies.

This program will focus on defining the unique nutritional needs of long-term care residents with dementia, preventing and managing nutritional and fluid deficiencies, and discussing the role of primary caregivers in maintaining resident nutritional health.

“Making Meals and Mealtime Meaningful – Nutrition and Dementia” is a video-based learning program. It supports the needs and motivations of health care professionals and staff that provide direct resident care. Conduct learning sessions for:

- All CNAs
- All RNs
- All newly hired CNAs and RNs

“Making Meals and Mealtime Meaningful – Nutrition and Dementia” can positively influence care giving by helping you understand:

- How aging affects our dietary health
- The ways dementia changes residents’ ability to nourish themselves and enjoy mealtime
- Your role in screening residents to identify those at nutritional risk or those whose diet and mealtime experience is inadequate
- What you can do to help residents get the nutrition and hydration/fluids that they need

We’ll describe changes to the brain and body related to dementia and how they affect care needs as well as residents’ ability to nourish themselves.

Then we’ll show you some simple things you can do to help residents eat and drink well – to meet their nutrition and hydration needs.
“Making Meals and Mealtime Meaningful – Nutrition and Dementia” is a practical educational tool. It demonstrates important skills necessary to help caregivers address the unique needs of residents with nutritional and fluid deficiencies as a result of the onset of dementia. Filled with practical information and useful instruction, this video explains prevention measures for overcoming nutritional and fluid deficiencies, how dementia can affect your residents’ nutrition and hydration, and so much more.

This video training provides a unique and interactive learning experience. In addition to the valuable learning information contained in the video and facilitator’s guide, the video in-service provides opportunities for facilitated discussion to help participants understand how dementia can influence nutrition and overall resident health.
SAMPLE GROUP SESSION AGENDA

Use the following sample agenda to structure a session featuring “Making Meals and Mealtime Meaningful – Nutrition and Dementia.”

Length of program: approximately 25 minutes

Suggested length of session: 1 hour and forty minutes (including a 10 minute break)

Materials needed:
- This facilitator’s guide
- The “Making Meals and Mealtime Meaningful – Nutrition and Dementia” program
- Optional paper and pencils for participant note-taking
- Optional flipchart and markers for writing key ideas
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 min</td>
<td>Welcome the group to your session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 min</td>
<td>Show first module of video program: <em>Introduction</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>INTRODUCE the “<em>Making Meals and Mealtime Meaningful – Nutrition and Dementia</em>” topic by leading this discussion:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**ASK:** In your facility, how common is dementia?

**ASK:** How often do you experience challenges providing good nutrition and helping residents with dementia enjoy mealtime?

**Review** the learning objectives – after viewing this program you will be able to understand:

- How aging affects our dietary health
- The ways dementia changes residents’ ability to nourish themselves and enjoy mealtime
- Your role in screening residents to identify those at nutritional risk or those whose diet and mealtime experience is inadequate
- What you can do to help residents get the nutrition and hydration/fluids that they need

**ASK:** How are these learning objectives relevant in your facility?
DISCUSS prior knowledge of nutrition for residents with dementia. Try to understand the group’s prior knowledge so you can help reinforce good practices and change those that are incorrect. (Encourage discussion to help uncover staff knowledge). With this baseline, you can better understand how to focus later discussion and follow-up exercises. You can also realize how the learning sessions have helped to improve training.

5 min Show second module of video program – *Nutrition, Aging and Dementia*

15 min Engage viewers in a brief discussion about MODULE 2. If group members are slow to respond, consider briefly recapping the main ideas emphasized in this module (or the key situations and behaviors with which you feel your group can most easily relate.)

ASK: What percentage of your residents suffers from some form of dementia?

ASK: Do any of your residents with dementia suffer from short term – or “primary” memory loss? How does this affect their quality of life? How does it affect the level of care you provide?

ASK: How does aging and dementia affect nutrition – our ability to eat and to enjoy mealtime?

ASK: Specifically, how do you think changes in the brain and behavior affect nutrition for residents with dementia?
DISCUSS the effects of aging and dementia on nutrition. Consider the consequences of undernutrition and dehydration for the residents at the participants’ facility. Encourage participants to talk about some of the problems that they witness in their residents with dementia. Discuss their role in any nutrition and hydration strategy and how that role can either be expanded or altered to better suit the needs or the residents under their care.

10 min BREAK

1 min Welcome the group back from the break.

7 min Show third/fourth modules of video program – Looking Out for Your Residents – Screening for Nutritional Risk and How to Know: Ask and Observe!

15 min Engage viewers in a brief discussion about MODULES 3 and 4 – focus on what caregivers can do to screen and identify residents who are having trouble. If group members are slow to respond, consider briefly recapping the main ideas emphasized in these modules (or the key situations and behaviors with which you feel your group can most easily relate).

ASK: Are there any strategies and protocols in place at your institution for recognizing signs of poor nutrition in residents with dementia? If so, what are they? If not, do you find yourself addressing your residents’ food and fluid intake in any other way?

ASK: What signs have you observed that would indicate that residents are having problems
eating? What have you seen to suggest that residents are not eating enough or not enjoying their mealtime?

ASK: Do you routinely check resident hydration? If so, using what method? Do you routinely check a resident’s ability to swallow? How often? How does any change in resident status affect their care?

ASK: What types of nutritional interventions do you use to address poor nutrition and dehydration?

7 min Show fifth module of video program – *What You Can Do – Helping Provide the Right Nutrition in the Right Setting*

15 min Engage viewers in a brief discussion about MODULE 5. If group members are slow to respond, consider briefly recapping the main ideas emphasized in this module (or the key situations and behaviors with which you feel your group can most easily relate).

ASK: What do you think you can do to help residents with dementia when they have problems with eating and or enjoying mealtime?

ASK: How do the protocols at your facility differ from the methods presented in this training?

ASK: What level of involvement do your residents have in their own nutrition? Do you take suggestions from residents to try to make mealtimes more familiar and enjoyable?
DISCUSS the participants’ roles during mealtime. Discuss their successes and challenges in attempting to maintain the nutrition of residents with dementia. What strategies do they use? Have they worked in the past? Allow all participants to talk about how individual strategies could be improved.

ASK: Does your facility encourage providing a resident’s favorite foods, or familiar routine when encouraging them to eat? If so, how do you find out what residents like? If not, how do you think the inclusion of personal touches could lead to better outcomes at mealtimes?

ASK: What methods do you use to assist residents with poor or failing eyesight at mealtime? Do you think that the suggestions described in the video can improve success at mealtimes for your residents with dementia?

ASK: Are residents evaluated by a speech therapist? How is any information regarding the residents’ eating and swallowing abilities presented to the frontline caregivers?

ASK: Are you routinely trained in the Heimlich maneuver, using suction machine, and providing portable oxygen delivery? Have you ever had occasion to use these tools? Do you feel that the use of these interventions could have been avoided?

DISCUSS the participants’ role in assisting residents at mealtime. Does time and protocol permit one-on-one time with residents who are eating? How do participants feel that this one-on-one involvement with residents affects their overall nutrition?
ASK: What specific training have they received regarding the feeding of residents who suffer the effects of a stroke or dementia?

ASK: Does your facility routinely provide residents with dental consultation? If so, how does this affect their nutrition routine? If not, how do you think this knowledge could improve their routine and overall nutrition and hydration?

ASK: What is the protocol for notifying the nurse or care planner of changes in behavior that could affect a resident’s nutrition or fluid status?

ASK: Does your facility have a specific protocol for tracking, reporting, and monitoring resident nutrition? If so, how is it different from the protocols highlighted in the video?

10 min BREAK

1 min Welcome the group back from the break.

5 min Show sixth module of video program – *Structured Programs*

15 min Engage viewers in a brief discussion about MODULE 6. If group members are slow to respond, consider briefly recapping the main ideas emphasized in this module (or the key situations and behaviors with which you feel your group can most easily relate).
DISCUSS the nutrition and mealtime routines at the participants’ facility. How do staff caregivers implement individual care planning? How successful have these routines been in providing for the unique needs of residents with dementia?

DISCUSS and DEFINE structured daily programs as a technique for providing care to residents with dementia.

DISCUSS the participants’ roles in managing and revising a resident’s structured daily program based on what they observe. How involved are they in developing a care plan? What input is expected of staff? What could be changed to improve the process of modifying a resident’s care plan?

1 min Show Conclusion of video

5 min In closing:

ASK for questions or additional comments from the group.

DISCUSS as appropriate.

Thank group members for their participation and conclude the session.
EXERCISES AFTER VIDEO

How do you rate our current success in providing information regarding the nutritional status of long-term care residents with dementia? How do residents rate our success?

What are some examples you’ve seen in just the last week or two of:

- Undernutrition and dehydration in residents with dementia
- Specific causes of dementia that have affected a resident’s ability to nourish themselves
- Successes using routines to better provide adequate nutrition and hydration to residents with dementia

What can you do to help yourself and other members of the staff better understand the nutrition and hydration needs of residents with dementia, and how to provide the best care to safeguard resident health and quality of life?

Suggest that participants accept a follow-up assignment as a proactive step in improving their understanding of how to provide for the unique nutritional needs of residents with dementia.

For example, each participant might be asked to identify a resident at their facility at risk for undernutrition due to the presence of dementia. Ask them to note how changes in their body or behavior are addressed to maintain adequate nutrition and hydration. Participants could also track the success of interventions addressing those residents who pose a risk for undernutrition or dehydration. What was done at the care planning stage? On the frontline?

Then, hold a second meeting and ask each staff member to share what they have learned or any successes they have witnessed.

Finally, as a group, establish a series of recommendations outlining how to best improve the care regarding the nutrition and fluid intake of residents with dementia.
Questions?

If you have questions about how to implement the “Making Meals and Mealtime Meaningful – Nutrition and Dementia” program, or if you would like information about other programs available from ElderCare Communications, call or write:

**ElderCare Communications**
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Phone: 800-505-3232
www.eldercarecommunications.com

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