

Nutrition & Dietetics Department
January 2024 – January 2026

Nutrition Training

For Care Home and Learning Disability Support Staff

Innovative 

Caring 

Agile 

Learning Outcomes

- Ensure care homes deliver sustainable nutrition programs that meet Care Quality Commission guidelines.
- Provide staff with the knowledge and confidence to deliver a nutritionally balanced diet that supports client health.
- Prevent nutrition-related health issues.
- Improve resident's quality of life.
- Reduce health inequalities by addressing behavioural risks to health.

Prevention is Better Than Cure

People with ASD and/or Learning Disabilities have an increased risk of overweight and obesity. This makes them vulnerable to developing long-term health problems including:

- Type 2 Diabetes
- Cardiovascular Disease & Respiratory Disorders
- Strokes
- Cancers
- Osteoarthritis, back pain & mobility problems
- Sleep Apnoea

How Can Diet Help?

- A healthy balanced diet is important to regulate bodily function – heart, brain, circulation, digestive system.
- Balance blood sugars and energy levels.
- Improve mental health (reduce depression and anxiety) and regulate sleep patterns.

Health & Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014

'Malnutrition' applies equally to both undernutrition and overnutrition.

- Care providers have a duty of care to provide service users with suitable and nutritious food and hydration which is adequate to sustain life and good health.
- Where a person is assessed as needing a specific diet, this must be provided in line with that assessment. Nutritional and hydration intake should be monitored and recorded to prevent unnecessary dehydration, weight loss or **weight gain**. Action must be taken without delay to address any concerns.
- Staff must follow the most up-to-date nutrition and hydration assessment for each person and take appropriate action if people are not eating and drinking in line with their assessed needs.
- Staff should know how to determine whether specialist nutritional advice is required and how to access and follow it.

The CQC can prosecute for a breach of this regulation if it results in avoidable harm or exposure to significant risk of harm.

Mental Capacity Act (2005)

There is a difference between indicating a food preference and making an informed choice

Mental capacity is time and decision specific. Individuals should be assessed on their ability to;

1. Understand and remember the relevant information for long enough to make the decision.
2. Use that information to consider options before making that decision.

Long term health implications may require a **Best Interests Decision** to be made on the individual's behalf.

Health Inequality

- Medication side-effects
- Genetics
- Sedentary lifestyles
- Levels of learning disability
- Financial constraints
- No recognition of overweight/obesity
- Poor nutritional knowledge and understanding
- Reliant on others for food provision & activity

Challenges Within Care Homes

- Different staff knowledge / experience and/or opinions.
- Staffing levels/ turnover.
- Cooking skills and/or time.
- Food used as bribes / rewards to moderate behaviour.
- Activity revolves around food (takeaway nights, shopping, coffee shop outings).
- Psychological aspect of food (love/care, preferences/opinions).
- Incomplete needs assessments / reviews.

Aims of Healthy Eating Training Package

- Ensure all residents of Learning Disability & Mental Health Care Homes in Hertfordshire **have the opportunity** to eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Optimise the health of residents.
- Reduce overweight and obesity and their related co-morbidities.
- Ensure residents are screened and assessed regularly to identify health conditions related to nutrition.
- Reduce the need for specialist dietetic intervention by establishing a baseline for healthy nutrition.

What Is A Healthy, Balanced Diet?

Eatwell Guide

Check the label on packaged foods

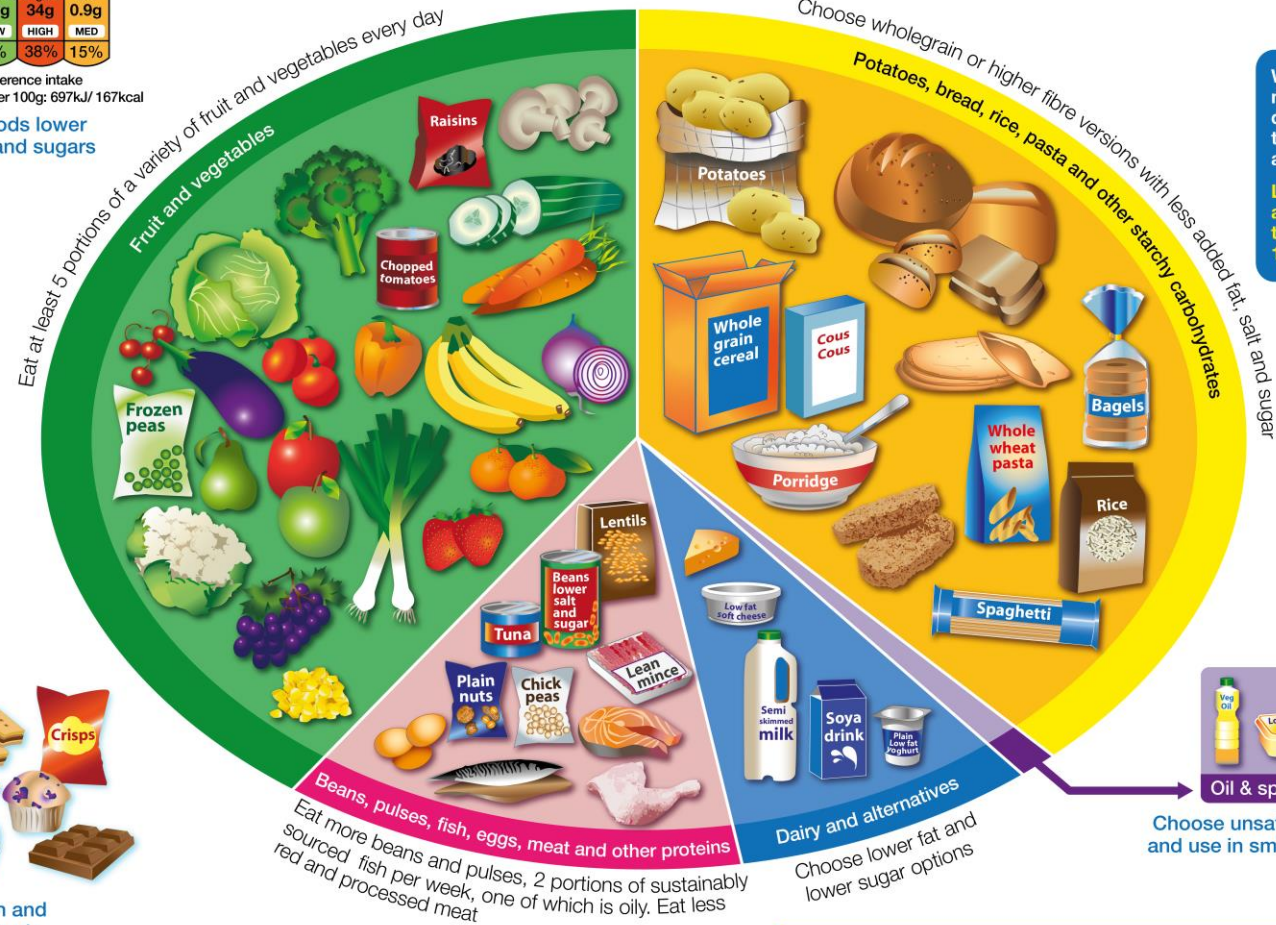
Each serving (150g) contains

Energy 1046kJ 250kcal	Fat 3.0g	Saturated 1.3g	Sugars 34g	Salt 0.9g
13%	LOW	LOW	HIGH	MED
	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.
Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Eat less often and in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Starchy Carbohydrates

- Starchy food should make up just over a third of the food we eat (**unless weight loss required**).
- Should be eaten at **every** meal.
Breakfast: oats, cereal, toast, pancakes
Lunch/Dinner: bread, pasta, potato, rice, cous cous
- Choose higher fibre or wholegrain varieties, (wholewheat pasta and brown rice - leave skins on potatoes).
- Starchy foods are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in our diet.
- Low in fat but the body stores excess as fat.



Proteins

- Essential for growth & repair (muscle, skin, tissue).

- 2 good sources of protein daily.

Breakfast: peanut butter, eggs, baked beans.

Lunch/Dinner: meat/chicken, fish, eggs, beans, tofu

- Pulses (beans, peas and lentils) are good alternatives to meat -low in fat and a good source of fibre and protein.

- Choose lean cuts of meat and mince (remove skin from chicken).

- Eat less red and processed meat (bacon, ham and sausages). No more than 1x week.

- Aim for at least 2 portions of fish every week - 1 of which should be oily (salmon, sardines or mackerel).



Milk & Dairy Foods (Including Alternatives)

- Important source of calcium, needed for healthy bones & teeth.
- 2-3 portions daily.
- Milk, cheese, yoghurt & fromage frais are good sources of protein and some vitamins.
- Lower-fat and low-sugar products (semi-skimmed, skimmed or 1% fat milk, reduced-fat cheese or plain low-fat yoghurt).
- Choose **fortified** plant-based versions.



Fats & Oils



- Essential for healthy cells & skin.
- Remember all types of fat are high in energy (9kcal per gram). Use sparingly.
- Unsaturated fats are healthier fats (vegetable, rapeseed, olive and sunflower oil).
- Use cooking sprays and low-fat spreads.

High fat and Sugary Foods



- Less often and in smaller amounts.
- Chocolate, cakes, biscuits, sweets.
- Puddings and ice cream.
- Crisps, pastries and butter.
- Fast food & takeaways.
- Soft drinks

Fluids & Hydration

- Thirst can be mistaken for hunger.
- Water, lower-fat milks, lower-sugar or sugar-free drinks and tea and coffee all count.
- Fruit juice and smoothies - contain free sugars that can damage teeth, so limit these drinks to a combined total of 150ml a day.
- Read labels for caffeine & sugar content.
- Use named water bottles & monitor daily intake.



Healthy Snacks



- Limit snacks.
- Plan ahead & record intake.
- Choose low-calorie options.
- Trial a snack-box.
- Choose non-food rewards/treats.

Use resources provided for ideas
– trial new flavours.

Reading Food Labels

Each burger contains:

ENERGY 924KJ 220kcal 11%	FAT 13g MED 19%	SATURATES 5.9g HIGH 30%	SUGARS 0.8g LOW <1%	SALT 0.7g MED 12%
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% of an adults reference intake.

Typical values per 100g: Energy 966kJ/ 230kcal

Front-of pack labels use traffic-light labelling– limit red & choose green!

Be mindful of portion sizes!

- Pre-packaged foods must display nutritional information (usually per 100g)
- Fat: High = More than 17.5g
Low = 3g of fat or less
- Sugars: High = More than 22.5g
Low= 5g of sugar or less
- Salt: High = More than 1.5g
Low = 0.3g or less

Avoid items high in saturated fats!

Weight Management



- Good planning – menu plans, shopping, cooking, snacks.
- Consistency and communication between staff & families.
- Accurate documentation – food diaries, weight records.
- Appropriate equipment – scales, measuring cups, plates & bowls.
- Commitment to nutritional goals – assess & monitor progress.
- Develop & build knowledge and skills. Trial recipes included.
- Share success!

Physical Activity

It is really important to keep residents active by trying different activities.



- Local walk- encourage with treasure hunts such as bird spotting/ I Spy.
- Using a static bike secured to the floor.
- Chalk Drawing on the patio/outside walls
- Using a hula hoop- rolling it back and forth or using it around the waist.
- Throwing a ball- focusing on a target.
- Stair challenge: Using the stairs 10 times a day for a year is the same as climbing Mount Everest!!

Sensory play and exposure to different textures

Exposing residents to different textures can help to encourage them to try new healthy foods.



- Making homemade playdough or slime in the garden.
- Finger painting / painting using cut up potatoes as stamps.
- Making bird feeders- using crunchy cereals and lard in a small pot.
- Using different fruits and vegetables to make edible homemade paints (blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, beetroot etc)

Non-food related rewards

It is important to offer non-food related rewards to continue to encourage healthy eating.



Examples of non-food related awards include:

- A lounge disco.
- An outing to the cinema, museum, aquarium etc.
- Craft activities.
- Screen time - group movie night, YouTube videos, TV program of their choice etc
- **AVOID excessive tablet usage or gaming.**

Tailor non-food related rewards suited to resident's personal interests and abilities.

Important Reminder!

To continue to encourage residents to make healthier choices it is important to set a positive example.

- If staff members are to eat or drink in front of residents, remember to choose water/milk and eat healthy foods.
- If staff would like to eat and drink items that are limited to residents - please do this in private, or on your break.

Putting It Into Action

- Review menu plans and ensure they comply with guidance provided.
- Assess takeaways, snacks, treats, ready-meals/jar sauces & puddings.
- Implement portion-control.
- Simplify choices – make it easier for residents to choose healthier options.
- Ensure each resident has a nutrition-care plan to meet their health goals. Re-assess regularly.
- Consider resident's capacity to make informed nutritional decisions and document to ensure consistency across staff teams and family.
- Monitor weights monthly (minimum) and monitor trends.

Additional Support:



- **National Autistic Society**

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/eating/all-audiences>

- **Prader-Willi Syndrome Association UK**

<https://www.pwsa.co.uk/dietary-management>

- **British Heart Foundation**

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/nutrition>

- **Diabetes UK**

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/enjoy-food/eating-with-diabetes/what-is-a-healthy-balanced-diet>

- **NHS Choices 12 Week Weight Loss Plan** provides weekly support, guides and advice. Tips for people who have carers and/or limited mobility.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/start-the-nhs-weight-loss-plan>

Contact Wendy Freeman - Care Home Educator Specialist For East and North Herts

(Wendy.freeman@isabelhospice.org.uk)

- This presentation and accompanying resource pack has been developed by the Nutrition & Dietetics Department, following guidance from the Care Quality Commission, NHS England, Gov.UK & The British Dietetic Association.
- Care homes that are compliant with the recommendations will achieve a CQC 'outstanding' rating for nutrition and hydration.

We'd appreciate your feedback and suggestions!

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