

## CONVERSATIONS IN LONG TERM CARE

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### *Meals in long term care homes*

The dietitian promotes quality of life, good nutrition, including fluid intake, to allow you to function at your best. If you have concerns about your diet, please contact the dietitian to talk more about your options.

**Those living in a long-term care home setting** usually take meals in a common dining room. This allows you to meet and visit with others. Not only does this make eating a social event, it may also spur interest in food and help you eat well.

- The dining room menu is repeated at minimum every three weeks and is adjusted for each season.
- The dietitian reviews the menu and looks at all aspects of an individual's nutrition needs. They can adapt meals within the limits of the food service department.
- Food and food preferences tend to be very important to people and we do what we can to offer favourite food options.
- The dietitian will also follow up as needed to see how things are going.

**There may be times when you have a hard time eating**, during those times, your meals may be changed to make sure you get the nutrients you need and allow ease in feeding, chewing and swallowing.

- You may eat less due to illness or due to natural changes that occur with aging
- You may have taste or food preference changes
- You may not feel hungry.
- You may also notice changes in your ability to chew and swallow. If you, your family, or the health-care team notices these changes, the care team will refer you to the Speech-Language Pathologist for a swallowing assessment.

**Food is often used of as an expression of love and care.** We know that sometimes family and friends like to bring food in to share. We encourage family participation. Please make sure to let your health-care team know when your family would like to bring foods in. We also ask that you do not share your personal food items with other residents

When people eat less, this can cause caregivers or loved ones to stress or worry. It is important that you, and your family, share your concerns with us so we can help guide you through any changes to your eating habits.

We know food and eating are often a highlight in the day. Your health-care team works together with each person and their family to provide the best mealtime experience possible

References available upon request