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## **Food served to older people in residential care**

**October 2006**

1. There are approximately 410,000 older people in residential and nursing homes across the UK. The quality of care for older people needs to meet the National Minimum Standards for Care Homes for Older People<sup>1</sup>. The Food Standard Agency's advice for food served to older people in residential care aims to support the wider care standards and provide the basis of assessment for residents, their family, care home staff and those responsible for commissioning and monitoring standards.
2. General healthy eating advice for institutions is provided in the [Food Standards Agency's nutrient and food based guidelines for UK institutions](#).<sup>2</sup> This paper provides specific guidance to care homes for older people who do not have nutritional requirements due to illness or disease. Further advice for those with special requirements has been published by the National Association of Care Caterers.<sup>3</sup>
3. The nutrient standards provided in this section are based upon the needs of older people aged 75 and over. The guidance given in this document will be sufficient, in most cases, for all those older people in residential care. The needs of older people below 75 years old have similarities with those provided in this document, but people below 75 years will have a requirement for greater amounts of some nutrients than identified here. Further clarification of their needs will be provided at a later date.
4. Data from the National Diet and Nutrition Surveys (NDNS)<sup>4 5 6</sup> show us that while, on average, the population consumes about the right amount of total fat, the highest consumers of fat are eating close to 50% of their energy as fat; far greater than recommended amounts. These surveys also tell us that, on average, the population consumes too much saturated fat, salt and non-milk extrinsic sugar (NMES, some people call this added sugars). We also know that for different sections of the population, some people have intakes of vitamins and minerals below recommended levels.
5. As such, we would advise those providing food for sections of the population where such discrepancies in intake are apparent, to buy and provide foods such that they result in lower intakes of fat, salt and NMES. We would also advise that foods providing vitamins and minerals should be bought and provided in greater amounts where insufficiencies are likely. This is not new advice.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health. Care Homes for Older People National Minimum Standards Care Homes regulations (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) (2000)

<sup>2</sup> Food Standard Agency nutrient and food based guidelines for UK institutions (2006) see <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/nutguideuk.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> National Association of Care Caterers. Planning special diets for adults and older people in care homes. (2006).

<sup>4</sup> Gregory, J (2000) National Diet and Nutrition Survey: young people aged 4 to 18yrs, The Stationary Office. London

<sup>5</sup> Henderson et al (2002) National Diet and Nutrition Survey: adults aged 19 to 64yrs . The Stationary Office. London

<sup>6</sup> Finch, S (1998) National Diet and Nutrition Survey: older people aged 74yrs + . The Stationary Office. London

6. For older people in care homes the Agency therefore advises that provision of food should meet the *average population requirement* as a minimum, but provide food to meet *target recommendations* where intake in this section of the population are known to be either in excess, or in deficit, of Government recommendations.
7. The Agency therefore recommends that residential care for older people should aim to provide food that meets the target recommendation for total and saturated fat, salt and NMES. That is to aim to provide food that provides less than 98% of the daily dietary reference value or Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) recommended levels for these nutrients covering all meals and snacks.
8. Where vitamin and mineral intakes are below recommended levels, residential care should aim to provide food to meet the target recommendation for these nutrients. That is at 100% of the daily reference nutrient intake<sup>7</sup> before inclusion of snacks. For older people in residential care this would include folate, riboflavin, potassium, magnesium, iron and zinc. The action of sunlight on the skin is the major source of vitamin D and older people may not receive sufficient sunlight if they spend large periods of time indoors. Older people in institutions are also likely to require additional vitamin D. Government advice for this population group is that this may be required as a 10 microgram (µg, mcg) supplement daily.
9. The Agency's guidance on nutrient provision in residential care for older people, based upon recommendations from the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy (COMA) and SACN, and taking account of excesses and insufficiencies from NDNS data is laid out in Table 1.
10. Table 2 provides further food-based advice to caterers that would help them to meet the nutrient recommendations above.<sup>8</sup>
11. Following recent changes in food labelling legislation, there is now a requirement for foods sold pre-packed to declare the presence of a list of specified allergenic foods. This applies to foods sold retail or to mass caterers. Therefore, if any residents in care homes have food allergies or intolerances, it is essential that those catering for them carefully read the labels or accompanying information for any products they buy, to check whether such allergenic ingredients are used. The list currently consists of cereals containing gluten (wheat, barley, rye, and oats), crustaceans, fish, peanuts, soybeans, milk, nuts (such as almond, hazelnut, walnut, cashew, and Brazil nut), celery, mustard, sesame and sulphur dioxide/sulphites. This list will be extended in 2007 to include molluscs and lupin.
12. The Food Standards Agency produced guidance for caterers on food allergy in 2004. This is available on our website (<http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/allergyintol/caterers/>).

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<sup>7</sup> The reference nutrient intake is the amount of a nutrient that is enough for almost every individual, even those with high needs.

<sup>8</sup> Table 2 is modified from Government advice on healthy eating (including that in Catering for Health available from the Stationary Office), food allergy, food hygiene and a report to the Food Standards Agency from the Caroline Walker Trust which will be published at a late date.

**Table 1. Nutrient-based guidance for older people in care:**

<b>Nutrient</b>	<b>Average population requirement (provided as daily averages over 7 days)</b>	<b>Recommended target for areas of excess or insufficiency (provided as daily averages over 7 days)</b>
Energy (kcal)	1955	
Total fat (g)	Max 76	<74.5
Saturated fat (g)	Max 24	<23.5
Carbohydrate (g)	Min 260	
NMES (g)	Max 57	<55.9
Fibre (as NSP) (g)	18	
Protein (g)	50	
Vitamin D (mcg)	Min10*	
Folate (mcg)	Min 200	>200
Iron (mg)	Min 9	>9
Zinc (mg)	Min 9.5	>9.5
Sodium (mg)	Max 2400	<2352
Salt (equivalent) (g)	Max 6.0	<5.88
Potassium (mg)	Min 3500	>3500
Magnesium (mg)	Min 300	>300
Riboflavin (mg)	Min 1.3	>1.3

\*see paragraph 8

**Table 2: Food-based guidelines for provision to older people residential care.**

<b>Bread, other cereals and potatoes</b>	
<b>Guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starchy foods should make up a third of the daily diet</li> <li>• Offer a variety of starchy foods with main meals including potatoes, rice, pasta, noodles and other grains</li> <li>• A variety of breads should be available daily as starters or meal accompaniments</li> <li>• Offer wholegrain cereals where possible</li> </ul>
<b>Why</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foods from this group are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in the diet. As well as starch, these foods supply fibre, calcium, iron and B vitamins</li> <li>• Wholegrain cereals are higher in fibre</li> <li>• Insoluble fibre in wholegrain bread, brown rice, fruit and vegetables etc helps to keep bowels healthy and stops constipation</li> <li>• Soluble fibre, e.g. in oats and pulses, may help reduce cholesterol</li> </ul>
<b>What's included</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All breads including wholemeal and granary bread, chapattis and bagels.</li> <li>• Potatoes, plantain, yam , sweet potato, squash and cassava</li> <li>• Breakfast cereals</li> <li>• Rice, couscous, bulgar wheat, maize, cornmeal</li> <li>• Noodles, pasta</li> <li>• Beans and pulses can be eaten as part of this group</li> <li>• Other grains e.g. oats, millet, barley etc</li> </ul>
<b>Tips on choosing foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask suppliers about the levels of salt, fat and sugars in their products and choose lower salt, fat and sugars options where appropriate – and where possible check the information provided on the packaging label</li> <li>• Try to choose products that meet the Food Standards Agency's salt targets. These are targets to limit the amount of salt in a wide range of foods, which retailers, manufacturers and some caterers (and catering suppliers) are working voluntarily to achieve by 2010. It might be difficult initially to find products that meet the targets, but over time this should become easier as work progresses</li> <li>• Look for white bread with added nutrients and fibre if residents don't like brown or wholemeal bread – choose lower salt bread where possible</li> <li>• Older people may prefer white bread, and higher fibre white bread may also be acceptable</li> <li>• Choose fortified breakfast cereals but look for those with a lower salt and/or sugar content</li> <li>• Choose wholegrain bread, flour, rice and pasta where possible, or consider using a mixture of wholemeal and white if residents are not keen on the wholemeal variety</li> <li>• Fortified breakfast cereals are a good source of vitamin D, folate, iron and zinc. Some will be good sources of fibre.</li> <li>• Wholemeal bread/flour can be good sources of folate, iron and provide useful amounts of zinc and fibre.</li> <li>• Potatoes can be a useful source of folate.</li> <li>• Beans and pulses such as soya beans, chick peas, lentils and broad beans can be useful sources of iron and fibre.</li> </ul>

## Bread, other cereals and potatoes (continued)

<p>Tips on cooking and serving foods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some older people find it easier to chew brown or wholemeal bread if it is lightly toasted.</li> <li>• Use thick cut bread for sandwiches</li> <li>• Use combinations of wholemeal and white bread in sandwiches to encourage consumption of wholemeal varieties</li> <li>• Boil potatoes in the minimum amount of water and for the shortest amount of time to retain vitamins, but ensure they are cooked until soft.</li> <li>• Roast potatoes in small amounts of vegetable oil, brush the oil on to potatoes to use smaller amounts</li> <li>• Try to cut down on the amount of fried foods offered, such as chips.</li> <li>• Choose thick cut chips or potatoes wedges instead of thin cut chips – they absorb less oil when cooking</li> <li>• Pre-blanch chips in steamers before frying, this will reduce the amount of oil absorbed</li> <li>• Use unsaturated oils such as sunflower or rapeseed oils instead saturated fats e.g. lard in cooking</li> <li>• Make sure the oil used for frying is at the correct temperature – this reduces the amount of fat absorbed</li> <li>• Drain fried foods before serving</li> <li>• Use baked products where possible instead of frying as they are likely to contain less fat; compare product labels for more information</li> <li>• Use skimmed or semi-skimmed milk to mash potatoes to smoothness.</li> <li>• Choose tomato and vegetable based sauces in preference to creamy, buttery sauces where appropriate</li> <li>• Use more starchy foods e.g. pasta in relation to meat/rich sauces (e.g. in lasagne, potato to meat in cottage pie)</li> <li>• Serve naan bread and plenty of rice with curries</li> </ul>
<p>Other tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer high-fibre cereals only where an older person has a very good appetite.</li> <li>• Consider the texture of the starchy option being provided, you may wish to consider offering an option that is softer to chew when also offering crisper/firmer foods</li> </ul>
<p>Allergy tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of residents who have coeliac disease, also known as gluten intolerance, who need to avoid all cereals containing gluten (wheat, oats, barley or rye). Alternative foods made from maize (i.e. polenta), rice, rice flour, potatoes, potato flour, buckwheat, sago, tapioca, soya and soya flour are available. Seek expert advice from a dietician where necessary. Some gluten free foods are available on prescription.</li> </ul>
<p>Food safety tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starchy foods and particularly foods such as grains and rice can contain spores of <i>Bacillus cereus</i>, a bacteria that can cause food poisoning. When the food is cooked, the spores can survive. Then, if it is left standing at room temperature, the spores will germinate, multiply and may produce toxins (poisons) that cause either vomiting or diarrhoea. Reheating will not get rid of the toxin.</li> <li>• Low numbers of <i>Bacillus cereus</i> won't make someone ill, but if food contains high numbers of the bacteria, or if a toxin has been produced, it could cause food poisoning. The longer that food is left at room temperature, the more likely it is that bacteria, or the toxins they produce, could make food unsafe. Therefore these types of food should be served directly after cooking, if this is not possible they should be cooled within an hour and kept in the fridge until reheating (for no more than 1 day). Avoid reheating more than once.</li> </ul>

<b>Fruit and vegetables</b>	
<b>Guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit and vegetables should make up about one third of the daily diet</li> <li>• Offer at least 5 different fruits and vegetables every day</li> <li>• Aim for 1 or 2 portions with each meal and offer fruit as a snack</li> <li>• A portion of fresh or cooked fruit or vegetables should be about 80g</li> </ul>
<b>Why</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit and vegetables are good sources of many vitamins, minerals and fibre</li> <li>• There is increasing evidence that consuming more than 400g of fruit and vegetables every day may reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease and some cancers</li> </ul>
<b>What's included</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All types of fresh, frozen, tinned and dried fruit</li> <li>• All types of fresh, frozen and tinned vegetables</li> <li>• 100% Fruit and vegetable juices also count but only once a day</li> <li>• Smoothies can count as more than one portion if they contain all the edible pulped fruit/vegetable. The number of portions depends on how many fruits or vegetables are used and how the smoothie was made</li> <li>• Beans and pulses are also included but, again, only count as a maximum of one portion per day</li> </ul>
<b>Tips on choosing foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask suppliers about the levels of salt, fat and sugars in their products and choose lower salt, fat and sugars options where appropriate – and where possible check the information provided on the packaging label</li> <li>• Try to choose products that meet the Food Standards Agency's salt targets. These are targets to limit the amount of salt in a wide range of foods, which retailers, manufacturers and some caterers (and catering suppliers) are working voluntarily to achieve by 2010. It might be difficult initially to find products that meet the targets, but over time this should become easier as work progresses.</li> <li>• Buy tinned fruit in natural juice rather than in syrup.</li> <li>• Buy tinned vegetables and pulses in water, with no added salt or sugar.</li> <li>• Store fresh vegetables in a cool, dark place</li> <li>• Most fruit and vegetables are a good source of folate including, spinach, broccoli, peas, oranges, green leafy salads and tomatoes, brussel sprouts and chickpeas.</li> <li>• Fruit and vegetables which are useful sources of iron include dark green leafy vegetables (but not spinach), broccoli, dried apricots and raisins, blackcurrants and broad beans.</li> <li>• Bananas are a particularly good source of potassium</li> </ul>
<b>Tips on cooking and serving foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steaming or cooking vegetables with minimum amounts of water, for as short as time as possible and serving as soon as possible will help retain vitamins</li> <li>• Use fresh fruit and vegetables as soon as possible, rather than storing them, to avoid vitamin loss. Alternatively, use frozen fruit and vegetables</li> </ul>

## Fruit and vegetables (continued)

<p>Tips on cooking and serving foods (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add vegetables and pulses to stews, casseroles or other dishes and offer a variety of vegetables at main meals</li> <li>• Offer a variety of dried fruits to add to cereal options and porridge and include dried fruit in cakes and desserts</li> <li>• Avoid leaving any cut vegetables exposed to air, light, heat or leaving them to soak. Cover and chill them</li> <li>• Offer colourful and interesting salads (with low fat dressings) and vegetables with main meals</li> <li>• Always have attractive looking fresh fruit on display</li> <li>• Try to offer alternative fruit dishes, and incorporate fruit into other desserts and dishes, including cold starters and savoury dishes (e.g. citrus chicken)</li> </ul>
<p>Other tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer fruit as a snack. Older people may find it difficult to peel or cut whole fruit, so a plate of sliced ready prepared fruits may be more acceptable.</li> <li>• Encourage a glass of 100% fruit juice, e.g. with breakfast or with a main meal, But remember fruit juices are high in NMES so if you offer this with breakfast everyday you will need to adjust NMES intake at other eating occasions</li> <li>• Pureed stewed fruit can be offered with custard or yoghurt or ice cream as dessert.</li> <li>• Foods and drinks rich in vitamin C, such as citrus fruit, green vegetables, peppers, tomatoes and potatoes, may help the body absorb iron.</li> <li>• For more information on guidelines for fruit and vegetables see the websites <a href="http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/nutritionessentials/fruitandveg/">http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/nutritionessentials/fruitandveg/</a> at <a href="http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/FiveADay/fs/en">http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/FiveADay/fs/en</a> or <a href="http://www.5aday.nhs.uk/WhatCounts/PortionSizes.aspx">http://www.5aday.nhs.uk/WhatCounts/PortionSizes.aspx</a> for information on portion sizes</li> </ul>
<p>Tips on food-related customs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people have restrictions on some vegetable foods. Caterers should check with the individual resident about their needs.</li> </ul>
<p>Allergy tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people can be allergic to certain fruits, such as apples, peaches, melon, mango, pineapple and kiwi. Allergy to fruits can be linked to pollen allergy and hay fever.</li> </ul>
<p>Food safety tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because most fresh fruits and vegetables are grown outdoors in non-sterile environments, it is possible that they may occasionally harbour potential food poisoning organisms that are present in soil, air and water. The number of potentially harmful micro-organisms on fresh produce intended to be eaten raw can be reduced by using hygienic growing practices and careful washing of fruit and vegetables with potable water before consumption.</li> <li>• NEVER use household cleaners/ washing up liquid as these products may not be safe for human consumption, and by using them harmful residues may be left on the food.</li> </ul>

<b>Milk and dairy products</b>	
<b>Guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk and dairy foods should be served every day</li> <li>• Moderate amounts should be offered each day as milk in drinks, cheese, yoghurt or milk-based puddings and sauces</li> <li>• Reduced fat dairy products are suitable for older people with good appetites</li> </ul>
<b>Why</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk and dairy products are excellent sources of calcium which is needed for optimal bone strength as well as sources of , protein, vitamin A, riboflavin and B<sub>12</sub></li> </ul>
<b>What's included</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All types of milk, including dried milk, goat's and sheep's milk.</li> <li>• Cheeses – e.g. Cheddar, cottage cheese, cheese spreads, Edam, goat's cheese, stilton.</li> <li>• Yoghurt (fruit or plain, whole milk or low-fat), or fromage frais.</li> <li>• Milk-based sauces, custard and milk puddings</li> </ul>
Tips on choosing foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask suppliers about the levels of salt, fat and sugars in their products and choose lower salt, fat and sugars options where appropriate – and where possible check the information provided on the packaging label</li> <li>• Try to choose products that meet the Food Standards Agency's salt targets. These are targets to limit the amount of salt in a wide range of foods, which retailers, manufacturers and some caterers (and catering suppliers) are working voluntarily to achieve by 2010. It might be difficult initially to find products that meet the targets, but over time this should become easier as work progresses.</li> <li>• Consider switching to semi-skimmed or skimmed milk</li> </ul>
Tips on cooking and serving foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include fruit and vegetables wherever possible</li> <li>• Use fromage frais, quark or plain yogurt in dishes in place of some of the cream (but be careful not to alter the taste or appearance of the dish)</li> <li>• Offer frozen yoghurts as an alternative to ice cream, to reduce fat content.</li> <li>• Use milk in sweet and savoury sauces, custard and puddings</li> <li>• Use reduced calorie mayonnaise in dressings or dilute with lower fat yogurt</li> <li>• Use béchamel, instead of cheese, sauce for dishes covered in cheese (e.g. lasagne)</li> <li>• Use reduced fat cheese in sandwiches or on cheese boards, or use smaller amounts of full fat cheeses</li> <li>• Use smaller amounts of stronger tasting cheese to provide flavour, this helps lower salt and fat content of dishes</li> <li>• Grate cheese for use in salads, sandwiches and fillings; you will tend to use less</li> <li>• Milk and milk products are good sources of riboflavin</li> </ul>
Other tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people with small appetites who may need to gain weight, or who are of low weight, should be encouraged to have full-fat milk and yoghurt.</li> <li>• Add extra calories, protein and nutrients to dishes by adding extra milk, cheese or dried milk powder in cooking</li> <li>• Offer milky drinks as snacks and before bed. Milkshakes may be an acceptable alternative, particularly in hot weather.</li> </ul>

<b>Milk and dairy products (continued)</b>	
Other tips (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer smooth yoghurt and fromage frais as a snack particularly for residents who have difficulty eating</li> <li>• Hard cheeses tend to be higher in saturated fat than softer cheese.</li> <li>• Use plain yoghurt and fromage frais instead of cream, soured cream or crème fraîche.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Tips on food-related customs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People of certain religions, such as Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims may not eat milk products, and Jewish people may require kosher milk products</li> <li>• Strict Jews who eat kosher foods do not eat milk products at the same time as, or immediately before or after foods/meals containing meat.</li> <li>• Most vegans, including some Rastafarians, will not eat milk products.</li> <li>• Caterers should check with the individual resident about their needs.</li> </ul>
Allergy tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people are allergic to milk and will need to avoid all milk products, including yoghurts and cheese.</li> <li>• Other people may be intolerant to lactose, the sugar found in milk. Such people may be able to tolerate small amounts of milk in their diets but people's sensitivities can vary. Lactose intolerance is found in about 5% of the adult population in the UK but is more common in certain ethnic communities where milk is not traditionally part of the adult diet. For example, in South America, Africa and Asia, more than 50% of the population are intolerant to lactose, rising to nearly 100% in some parts of Asia.</li> <li>• There are a number of alternative products such as soya milk or rice milk and these should be fortified with calcium.</li> </ul>
Food safety tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpasteurised (raw) milk should be avoided as it may contain micro-organisms harmful to health.</li> <li>• Milk and dairy products should always be refrigerated and stored at temperatures below 8°C (ideally at temperatures between 0°C &amp; 4°C)</li> <li>• In order to avoid the risk of listeriosis, vulnerable groups are advised to avoid eating ripened soft cheeses of the Brie, Camembert and blue veined types, whether pasteurised or unpasteurised. This is because ripened soft cheeses are less stable than hard cheeses (they are less acidic and contain more moisture) and are therefore more inclined to allow growth of undesirable bacteria such as <i>Listeria</i>.</li> </ul>

## Meat, fish and meat alternatives

<b>Guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A meat or meat alternative should be offered at all main meals</li> <li>• Fish should be offered at least twice a week, one of which should be oily</li> <li>• Meat alternatives for vegetarians should be varied and use a variety of foods from this group</li> </ul>
<b>Why</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meat and fish are good source of protein and of vitamins and minerals such as iron, zinc and B<sub>12</sub>.</li> <li>• Oily fish provide long chain omega-3 fatty acids which may help to prevent heart disease. Such foods are also a source of vitamins A and D and iron.</li> <li>• Beans and pulses are sources of protein, fibre, iron and zinc.</li> <li>• Eggs are a good source of protein, vitamins A, vitamin D, B12 and iodine</li> <li>• Nuts provide a source of protein, iron, fibre, calcium and essential fatty acids.</li> </ul>
<b>What's included</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meat, poultry, offal, fish, eggs, nuts, beans, pulses and meat alternatives.</li> <li>• Meat includes all cuts of beef, lamb and pork and meat and meat products such as ham, corned beef and sausages.</li> <li>• Fish includes fresh, frozen and tinned fish, such as tuna, sardines, pilchards and mackerel, and fish products such as fish cakes and fish fingers.</li> <li>• Oily fish, such as salmon, sardines and fresh tuna. Canned tuna is not considered an oily fish as the long chain omega-3 fatty acids are lost in the canning process for tuna. Other canned oily fish are not affected in the same way.</li> <li>• Beans and pulses – e.g. baked beans, butter beans, kidney beans and lentils are in this group and provide a good source of protein for vegetarians.</li> <li>• Other textured protein products suitable for vegetarians, such as tofu, and textured protein products such as soya and quorn(R)</li> </ul>
<b>Tips on choosing foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask suppliers about the levels of salt, fat and sugars in their products and choose lower salt, fat and sugars options where appropriate – and where possible check the information provided on the packaging label</li> <li>• Try to choose products that meet the Food Standards Agency's salt targets. These are targets to limit the amount of salt in a wide range of foods, which retailers, manufacturers and some caterers (and catering suppliers) are working voluntarily to achieve by 2010. It might be difficult initially to find products that meet the targets, but over time this should become easier as work progresses</li> <li>• Look for canned beans and pulses with no added salt and sugar.</li> <li>• Look for meat products with higher meat content, look at the label for more information</li> <li>• Choose lean meats where possible</li> <li>• Chose tinned fish in spring water rather than brine or oil</li> <li>• Choose smoked meats and fish less often as they can be high in salt</li> <li>• Oily fish, such as herring, mackerel, pilchards, salmon, sardines, trout or roe and egg yolks are rich in vitamin D</li> </ul>

## Meat, fish and meat alternatives (continued)

<p>Tips on cooking and serving foods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove visible fat from meat and skin from poultry</li> <li>• Serve oily fish as pâtés and spreads on bread and toast.</li> <li>• Boil, bake, grill or poach rather than frying or roasting where possible as this will lower the fat content</li> <li>• Stand poultry and joints on racks when cooking to allow the fat to flow away</li> <li>• Add pulses to meat dishes to increase the fibre content, reduce the overall fat content and add extra protein</li> <li>• Serve slightly less meat with extra vegetables or starchy foods</li> <li>• Serve foods with tomato or vegetable based sauces rather than creamy, buttery sauces where appropriate to lower the fat content.</li> <li>• If frying, make sure the temperature is correct and change fat./oil regularly and drain well to reduce fat content</li> <li>• Larger pieces of meat will absorb less fat than smaller pieces</li> <li>• When baking fish, brush with unsaturated vegetable oil rather than butter</li> <li>• If a dish must be finished with butter, try lightly brushing with melted butter before serving</li> <li>• When serving foods with gravy opt for lower salt versions</li> <li>• Gradually lower the salt content of food you cook yourself to allow residents taste buds to adapt and try using alternative herbs and spices to flavour foods</li> <li>• Season food sparingly with salt or seasonings containing salt, a chef's palette may be less sensitive to salt than many of the residents</li> </ul>
<p>Other tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For older people who have difficulty chewing, offer soft lean meat and fish or meat and fish dishes where the meat has been minced or served in a sauce.</li> <li>• Liver pâté is a useful source of nutrients for older people but liver and liver products should not be served more than once a week.</li> </ul>
<p>Tips on food-related customs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People of certain religions, such as Hindus and Sikhs, as well as vegetarians and vegans including some Rastafarians, may not eat eggs, meat or fish.</li> <li>• Some Jewish people will require kosher meat and Muslims will require Halal meat. Pork and pork products are not appropriate.</li> <li>• Strict Jews who eat kosher foods do not eat meat products at the same time as, or immediately before or after foods/meals containing meat. They may only eat fish with fins and scales and do not eat shellfish. Eggs should not contain blood spots.</li> <li>• Hindus who eat fish may only eat fish with fins and scales and may also not eat shellfish</li> <li>• Caterers should check with the individual resident about their needs</li> </ul>
<p>Allergy tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people are allergic to nuts, peanuts, fish, shellfish and eggs. The labelling of bought-in products will need to be checked carefully to see if these allergenic foods are used as ingredients.</li> </ul>

## Meat, fish and meat alternatives (continued)

### Food safety tips

- Always store meat and fish in the fridge, ideally at temperatures between 0°C and 4°C.
- Always ensure that uncooked meat and ready to eat foods are stored apart. Ideally raw meat & fish should be covered and stored on the bottom shelf where they can not drip onto other foods. Cooked meat and fish should be covered and stored above raw in the fridge.
- Eggs are a useful source of nutrients but when served to elderly people they should always be well cooked, until both the yolk and white are solid. This is to avoid the risk of Salmonella, which causes a type of food poisoning.
- At risk groups should avoid all types of pâté, including vegetable. This is because pâté can sometimes contain Listeria.
- Always ensure that meat is well cooked. This is especially important with poultry and products made from minced meat, such as sausages and burgers. Make sure these are cooked until they are piping hot all the way through any juices run clear and no pink meat is left.
- Vulnerable groups should avoid raw shellfish. This is because raw shellfish can sometimes contain harmful bacteria and viruses that could cause food poisoning. It is far safer to eat shellfish as part of a hot meal, such as in a curry.

<b>Foods containing fat and foods and drinks containing sugar</b>	
<b>Guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use foods containing fat sparingly. Look out for lower fat alternatives or eat these foods in smaller amounts. Where possible replace saturated fat with unsaturated fat</li> <li>• Snacking on sugary foods and drinks throughout the day is discouraged as this can cause tooth decay. Older people may enjoy some sweet foods as snacks. These should be provided less often or in small amounts</li> </ul>
<b>Why</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main nutrients provided by such foods are fat and sugars. Some can also be high in salt. These nutrients are consumed in greater amounts than required and are associated with disease progression and/or dental caries.</li> <li>• As for the rest of the population, foods from this group can contribute to excess energy intakes if they are eaten in large amounts.</li> <li>• Often foods high in calories offer few other nutrients. If appetites are poor, it is important that these foods do not displace more nutrient rich foods.</li> </ul>
<b>What's included</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foods containing fat include: butter, margarine, other spreading fats and low-fat spreads, cooking oils, oil-based salad dressings, mayonnaise, cream, chocolate, crisps, biscuits, pastries, cakes, puddings, ice cream, rich sauces, and gravies.</li> <li>• Foods containing sugar include: soft drinks, sweets, jams and sugar, as well as foods such as cakes, puddings, biscuits, pastries and ice cream.</li> </ul>
<b>Tips on choosing foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask suppliers about the levels of salt, fat and sugars in their products and choose lower salt, fat and sugars options where appropriate – and where possible check the information provided on the packaging label</li> <li>• Try to choose products that meet the Food Standards Agency's salt targets. These are targets to limit the amount of salt in a wide range of foods, which retailers, manufacturers and some caterers (and catering suppliers) are working voluntarily to achieve by 2010. It might be difficult initially to find products that meet the targets, but over time this should become easier as work progresses</li> </ul>
<b>Tips on cooking and serving foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use mono- and poly- unsaturated fats wherever possible for cooking, spreading and in dressings.</li> <li>• Choose soya, rapeseed and olive oils for cooking and salad dressings</li> <li>• Choose sunflower oil, soya oil or olive oil fat spreads</li> <li>• Choose tomato and vegetable based sauces rather than cream based ones</li> <li>• Offer fewer fried foods</li> <li>• Serve salad dressings and desert toppings separately so that residents can decide how much they want</li> <li>• Don't automatically garnish potatoes and vegetables with butter prior to service</li> <li>• Ensure correct temperatures when frying so that foods absorb less fat</li> <li>• Reduce the amount of sugar used in dishes where practical and acceptable</li> <li>• Use dried or fresh fruit to sweeten dishes</li> </ul>

**Foods containing fat and foods and drinks containing sugar  
(continued)**

Other tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foods high in fat and sugars help make meals palatable, these can be included in the diet but should be consumed sparingly or in small amounts</li><li>• It is difficult for most older adults to obtain the full daily requirement of vitamin D from the diet alone. Government advice is that older adults who do not have adequate exposure to sunlight should take consider taking a 10mcg daily vitamin D supplement.</li></ul>
Tips on food-related customs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many religious celebrations may include traditional foods that are high in fat or sugars. Providing these foods occasionally as part of a celebration or festival is important for many residents.</li></ul>
Allergy tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many foods high in fat or sugar, such as cakes and biscuits, can contain eggs, milk or nuts and are not suitable for people allergic to these foods.</li></ul>
Food safety tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eggs are a useful source of nutrients but when served to elderly people they should always be well cooked, until both the yolk and white are solid. This is to avoid the risk of Salmonella, which causes a type of food poisoning.</li></ul>

13. Figure 1 provides an example menu that meets the food and nutrient based guidance in tables 1 and 2.

14. The nutrient analysis of this example menu is provided in Table 3. The basis for this analysis is provided in a separate report from an independent dietician.<sup>9</sup> The analysis of the example menu is taken as a daily average over a 7 day period. It is assumed that the residential home provides for all the food for its residents. The individual eating occasions within the day have not been chosen to reflect the specific split identified for institutions in our general advice<sup>2</sup> although for the majority of nutrients the menu in Figure 1 does meet this advice.

15. A further example menu is being prepared for the Agency by an independent dietician and will be provided in due course to further assist caterers.

**Table 3. Nutrient analysis of example menu plan for older people care homes.**

<b>Nutrient</b>	<b>Average population requirement (provided as daily averages over 7 days)</b>	<b>Recommended target for areas of excess or insufficiency (provided as daily averages over 7 days)</b>	<b>Nutrient Provision from example menu plan (provided as daily averages over 7 days)</b>
Energy (kcal)	1955		1962
Total fat (g)	Max 76	<74.5	62.8
Saturated fat (g)	Max 24	<23.5	22.5
Carbohydrate (g)	Min 260		281
NMES (g)	Max 57	<55.9	54.5
Fibre (as NSP) (g)	18		22.6
Protein (g)	50		84.1
Vitamin D (mcg)	Min 10*		3
Folate (mcg)	Min 200	>200	366.5
Iron (mg)	Min 9	>9	14
Zinc (mg)	Min 9.5	>9.5	10.9
Sodium (mg)	Max 2400	<2352	2179
Salt (equivalent) (g)	Max 6.0	<5.88	5.53
Potassium (mg)	Min 3500	>3500	4133
Magnesium (mg)	Min 300	>300	369
Riboflavin (mg)	Min 1.3	>1.3	2.4

\* It is difficult for most older adults to obtain the full daily requirement of vitamin D from the diet alone. Government advice is that older adults who do not have adequate exposure to sunlight should take consider taking a 10mcg daily vitamin D supplement.

<sup>9</sup> Daniels, L. Example Menus for care homes (2006) see <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/examplemenus.pdf>

## Example Menu for Care Homes

(V)- Vegetarian Option	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Early Morning</b>	Tea or Coffee Water	Tea or Coffee Water	Tea or Coffee Water	Tea or Coffee Water	Tea or Coffee Water	Tea or Coffee Water	Tea or Coffee Water
<b>Breakfast</b>	Prunes Cereals / Porridge Boiled Egg Toast with butter / spread Preserves Tea or Coffee Water	Grapefruit Segments Cereals / Porridge Toast with butter / spread Preserves Tea or Coffee Water	Fresh banana Cereals / Porridge Sausage and Tomato Toast with butter / spread Preserves Tea or Coffee Water	Orange Juice Cereals / Porridge Toast with butter / spread Preserves Tea or Coffee Water	Fresh Melon Cereals / Porridge Scrambled Eggs Toast with butter / spread Preserves Tea or Coffee Water	Fresh banana Cereals / Porridge , Toast with butter / spread Preserves Tea or Coffee Water	Orange Juice Cereals / Porridge Bacon and Mushrooms Toast with butter / spread Preserves Tea or Coffee Water
<b>Mid Morning Snack</b>	Tea or Coffee + Water Biscuits	Tea or Coffee + Water Biscuits	Tea or Coffee + Water Biscuits	Tea or Coffee + Water Biscuits	Tea or Coffee+ Water Biscuits	Tea or Coffee + Water Biscuits	Tea or Coffee + Water Biscuits
<b>Lunch</b>	Lancashire Hot Pot Grilled Plaice & Parsley Sauce Vegetable Pakora (V) Boiled Potatoes Cauliflower / Peas Banana Custard Fresh Apple Tea or Coffee Water	Spaghetti Bolognaise Tuna Pasta Bake Vegetarian Lasagne (V) Side Salad Rhubarb Crumble & Custard Fresh Pear Tea or Coffee water	Poached Salmon Roast Chicken Vegetable Chilli & Rice (V) Roast / Mashed Potatoes Cabbage / Green Beans Plum Sponge & Custard Fresh Orange Tea or Coffee Water	Cottage Pie Chicken Chasseur Vege Shepherds Pie (V) Boiled Potatoes Broccoli / Leeks Rice Pudding & Apricots Fresh Banana Tea or Coffee Water	Fried Cod Gammon & Pineapple Vegetable Flan (V) Chips / /Mashed Potatoes Peas / Sweet corn Tinned Pears & Custard Fresh Grapes Tea or Coffee Water	Chicken Curry & Rice Beef Grill Steak & Rice Vegetable Curry & Rice (V) Mixed Vegetables Crème Caramel Fresh Banana Tea or Coffee Water	Roast Beef Fish Pie Cauliflower Cheese (V) Roast / Mashed Potatoes Carrots / Sprouts Apple Pie & Custard Fresh Melon Tea or Coffee Water
<b>Afternoon Tea</b>	Tea or Coffee + Water Scone & Jam Soft Cheese Sandwich Biscuits Fresh Orange	Tea or Coffee + Water Malt Loaf Biscuits Fresh Pear	Tea or Coffee + Water Ring Doughnut Soft Cheese Sandwich Biscuits Fresh Grapes	Tea or Coffee + Water Currant Bun Biscuits Fresh Plums	Tea or Coffee + Water Chocolate Éclair Soft Cheese Sandwich Biscuits Fresh Apple	Tea or Coffee + Water Custard Tart Biscuits Fresh Orange	Tea or Coffee + Water Sponge Cake & Cream Soft Cheese Sandwich Biscuits Fresh Pear
<b>Evening Meal</b>	Pea Soup & Bread Roll Macaroni Cheese Sandwiches - Ham / Salmon Side Salad Fresh Fruit Salad & Ice-Cream Tea or Coffee Water	Tomato Rice Soup & Bread Roll Jacket Potato & Baked Beans Sandwiches – Turkey / Egg Side Salad Stewed Apple Yoghurt Tea or Coffee Water	Carrot & Coriander Soup & Bread Roll Cheese And Tomato Pizza Sandwiches – Beef Salad / Tuna Side Salad Melon Chocolate Mousse Tea or Coffee Water	Cream Of Mushroom Soup & Bread Roll Sardines & Tomato on Toast Sandwiches - Egg / Turkey Side Salad Canned Peaches/ Fruit Salad Ice-Cream Tea or Coffee Water	Potato & Leek Soup & Bread Roll Sausage Tomato & Bread Sandwiches – Cheese And Pickle / Salmon Side Salad Fresh Fruit Salad Yoghurt Tea or Coffee Water	Butter Bean & Tomato Soup & Bread Roll Jacket Potato, Cheese & Coleslaw Sandwiches – Beef Salad / Tuna Side Salad Fresh Fruit Salad Cheesecake Tea or Coffee + Water	Vegetable Soup & Bread Roll Prawn Salad & Bread Sandwiches – Egg / Turkey Side Salad Trifle Fresh Grapes Tea or Coffee Water
<b>Nightime Snack</b>	Hot Drink Biscuits Water	Hot Drink Jam Sandwich / Biscuit Water	Hot Drink Biscuits Water	Hot Drink Jam Sandwich /Biscuits Water	Hot Drink Biscuits Water	Hot Drink Jam sandwich /Biscuits Water	Hot Drink Biscuits Water

\* Hot drink for nighttime snack is choice of tea, coffee, hot chocolate, malted milk drink or ovaltine

16. The above nutrient and food based advice do not represent new guidance. Rather, this advice provides a summary of current Government recommendations for people aged 75 years and over. The guidance is not intended for those who may have different nutritional requirements due to illness or disease and are undernourished or at risk of under nutrition (e.g. because of a poor appetite). All residents need appropriate assessment and monitoring of their food intakes and nutritional status. If residents are unable to meet their requirements for energy and other nutrients or have other specific medical dietary needs, then these must be appropriately provided for outside the scope of this guidance.
17. The example menu provided for care homes in this report represents an example. There are other menu options including different hot and cold main meals, snacks and drinks which will provide the nutrient intake outlined in Table 1. Acceptability of the options and sufficient variety are important aspects of food and need to be built into menu planning.
18. Many caterers employ registered nutritionists or dieticians who are able to assess menus against Government recommendations. The Food Standard Agency recommends that assessment against the guidance in this document will ensure that those, without specific medical dietary need, consuming food provided by institutions will be met. In undertaking any such assessment it is important that the analysis uses appropriate software with up-to-date information (as a minimum the most recent edition of McCance & Widdowson<sup>10</sup>) and takes accounts of cooking losses and waste. We also recommend that those responsible for commissioning food provision in institutions request such information and check this with actual provision to ensure the needs of clients are met.

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<sup>10</sup> Food Standards Agency (2002) McCance and Widdowson's The Composition of Foods, Sixth summary edition. Cambridge: Royal Society Chemistry.