

Unit 15: Understanding and Meeting the Nutritional Requirements of Individuals with Dementia

Unit reference number: D/616/7124

Level: 3

Unit type: Optional

Credit value: 3

Guided learning hours: 26

Unit summary

Individuals with dementia often have specific nutritional needs because of the impact of this progressive degenerative disorder on their understanding of food and nutrition, their appetite or their physical ability to eat and digest food. It may also be because of changes in their calorie requirements or their emotional reactions to food and eating.

In this unit, you will develop the knowledge and skills to meet these nutritional requirements.

You will gain an understanding of the importance of nutritional balance for the individual and the impact of dementia on the process of maintaining health and wellbeing through nutrition. You will consider the impact of different factors, such as environment and individual preference, on the person with dementia. You will develop a clear understanding of the importance of the person-centred approach and culture in nutritional planning, and of developing strategies for interpreting the reactions of people with diminishing communicative capacities to food and drink.

This unit will enable you to plan, prepare, implement and evaluate strategies to maximise the wellbeing of the individual with dementia with regard to their nutritional intake. The unit will also enable you to demonstrate the skills needed for putting the strategies into practice.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, the learner needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria outline the requirements the learner is expected to meet to achieve the unit.

Learning outcome 3 needs to be assessed in the workplace environment.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
<p>1 Understand the nutritional needs that are unique to individuals with dementia</p>	<p>1.1 Describe how cognitive, functional and emotional changes associated with dementia can affect eating, drinking and nutrition</p> <p>1.2 Explain why it may be important for someone with dementia to have their personal and cultural preferences recognised with reference to food and drink</p> <p>1.3 Explain how other health and emotional problems can affect the nutritional needs of individuals with dementia</p> <p>1.4 Explain why it is important to include a variety of food and drink in the diet of an individual with dementia</p>
<p>2 Understand the effect that mealtime environments can have on individuals with dementia</p>	<p>2.1 Explain how a person-centred approach can support an individual with dementia to eat and drink as independently as possible</p> <p>2.2 Explain how mealtime environments and food presentation can be designed to help an individual with dementia to eat and drink</p> <p>2.3 Evaluate how mealtime cultures and environments can be a barrier to meeting the nutritional needs of an individual with dementia</p>

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
<p>3 Be able to support an individual with dementia to enjoy good nutrition</p>	<p>3.1 Demonstrate how mealtimes for an individual with dementia are planned to support his/her ability to eat and drink</p> <p>3.2 Demonstrate how the specific support needs for eating and drinking of an individual with dementia are addressed</p> <p>3.3 Evaluate how a person-centred approach to meeting the nutritional requirements of an individual with dementia has affected the wellbeing of the individual</p>

What needs to be learned

Learning outcome 1: Understand the nutritional needs that are unique to individuals with dementia

Individuals with dementia

- An individual is someone requiring care or support.
- Cognitive changes:
 - support the individual with dementia to understand importance of nutrition
 - support the individual with dementia to contribute to the social aspect of eating and drinking.
- Functional changes:
 - the effects of dementia on an individual's fine and gross motor skills
 - promote choice and variety in the food to individuals with dementia.
- Emotional changes:
 - effects of dementia on the individual's perception of taste, appetite and understanding of the need for a balanced diet.

Personal and cultural preferences

- Benefits of promoting personal food preferences of people with dementia.
- Cultural variations in tastes.
- Differing nutritional value in different foods.
- The effects of dementia on the sense of taste.

Impact of other health conditions on nutrition

- The impact on nutritional needs of:
 - physical ill health
 - emotional distress.

Learning outcome 2: Understand the effect that mealtime environments can have on individuals with dementia

Mealtime environments and food presentation

- How food presentation can stimulate appetite.
- Effects and recognition of the importance of mealtime social conventions on an individual with dementia.
- The importance of the dining environment on:
 - appetite
 - emotional state
 - compliance of the individual with dementia.

What needs to be learned

The person-centred approach

- Person-centred approach is a way of working which aims to put the person at the centre of the care situation, taking into account their individuality, wishes and preferences.
- Recognise and meet the dietary needs of an individual with dementia.
- Respond to the body language of the individual with dementia.
- Provide and support the individual to use the right equipment.
- Promote independence with eating and drinking for the individual considering:
 - o capability
 - o need
 - o environmental constraints
 - o staffing levels.

Learning outcome 3: Be able to support an individual with dementia to enjoy good nutrition

Planning to support to eat and drink

- This is a way of working that aims to put the individual at the centre of the care situation, taking into account their individuality, wishes and preferences.
- Planning and consultation with the individual and the team as part of the person-centred approach to nutrition for an individual with dementia.
- The importance of nutritional requirements to the wellbeing of an individual with dementia.

Planning for and meeting the nutritional needs of an individual with dementia

- Designing and implementing a plan for meeting the nutritional needs of an individual with dementia.
- Mealtimes:
 - o meal planning
 - o food shopping
 - o food preparation
 - o pre- and post-meal activities
 - o dining
 - o snacking.
- Supporting individuals with dementia in meeting their nutritional needs with reference to:
 - o specialist equipment
 - o the role of the healthcare worker in assisting feeding
 - o the importance of effective communication.

What needs to be learned

Wellbeing

- Physical health.
- Appropriate weight gain/loss.
- Improved sleep patterns.
- Emotional health.
- Reduced confusion.
- Improved physical health.
- Reduced infections.
- Social inclusion.
- Improved emotional state.

Information for tutors

Suggested resources

Books

Coleman G – *Alzheimer’s Society Guide to Catering for People with Dementia*
(Alzheimer’s Society, 2009) ISBN 9781906647230

Pulsford D, Thompson R – *Dementia Support for Family and Friends*
(Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2013) ISBN 9781849052436

Websites

www.alzheimers.org.uk	Information and advice on caring for individuals with dementia.
www.carersuk.org	Website for information and advice for carers.
www.evidence.nhs.uk	Evidence-based information on caring for individuals with dementia.

Assessment

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the associated qualification specification for this unit.

This unit is internally assessed. To pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment must demonstrate that they have met the required standard specified in the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and the requirements of the assessment strategy.

To ensure that the assessment tasks and activities enable learners to produce valid, sufficient, authentic and appropriate evidence that meets the assessment criteria, centres should follow the guidance given in *Section 8 Assessment* of the associated qualification specification and meet the requirements from the assessment strategy given below.

Wherever possible, centres should adopt an holistic approach to assessing the units in the qualification. This gives the assessment process greater rigour and minimises repetition, time and the burden of assessment on all parties involved in the process.

Unit assessment requirements

This unit must be assessed in accordance with the assessment strategy (principles) in *Annexe A* of the associated qualification specification.

Assessment decisions for learning outcome 3 (competence) must be made based on evidence generated during the learner's normal work activity. Any knowledge evidence integral to this learning outcome may be generated outside of the work environment, but the final assessment decision must be within the real work environment. Simulation cannot be used as an assessment method for learning outcome 3.

Assessment of learning outcomes 1 and 2 (knowledge) may take place in or outside of a real work environment.