

This is information for care staff in all residential environments. People suffering from COVID-19 generally lose their appetite which results in weight and muscle mass loss. This is a guide to help your residents maximise their intake and manage some of the symptoms they may experience.

Below is some different ways you can help maximise their intake and nutrition while they are ill

### Eating to Help Recovery

- ✓ Breathlessness can make it harder to eat & drink as chewing can be an effort and tiring. Try offering **soft, moist foods** such as porridge, pasta dishes, stovies or puddings which are easier to manage
- ✓ Loss of appetite is common – give **smaller portions** so your resident is not overwhelmed. You can always offer 'seconds' or another course if they want more.
- ✓ Adopt a '**little and often**' approach to meals, encouraging nourishing snacks and drinks throughout the day
- ✓ Encourage foods which are **high in protein** e.g. meats, chicken, fish, eggs, beans & meat alternatives. Dairy foods such as cheese, yogurt and foods made from milk are also good choices
- ✓ Make food as **nourishing** as possible by adding extra protein and calories. (see **Tips for Fortifying your Diet** section)
- ✓ Ask the Chef to make up some **high calorie homemade milkshakes & juices**
- ✓ It is important to keep your resident well hydrated, aim for 2 L of fluid per day (around 8 cups). If they have a high temperature they may need to take more than this

### Nourishing Drinks & Snacks

Offering your resident snacks and milk based drinks in between meals is useful when their appetite is poor. This can include:

- Hot drinks such as milky tea, coffee or hot chocolate or cold drinks like milkshakes & smoothies (make up with enriched milk to add extra calories – see recipe below)
- Biscuits, home baking, crackers & cheese

### Enriching Foods

You can do the following to add calories to your resident's meals:

- Add extra calories by adding butter to mashed, boiled or jacket potatoes; vegetables, rolls, toast & crackers
- Enrich milk by whisking in 2-4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder into a pint of milk. Use this for drinks, foods & in cooking
- Add grated cheese, cream cheese or cream to foods such as soups, sauces or curries

### Dealing with Taste Changes

Food may not taste the same when suffering from COVID-19. Try the following with residents:

- Try with stronger or weaker flavours to improve their intake. Sharp tastes such as cranberry, lemon or lime may help
- If food tastes metallic, try to ensure good oral hygiene and using plastic cutlery may help
- Add flavouring to foods e.g. nutmeg on milk puddings, ginger or cinnamon to fruit & yoghurts
- You can make meals more flavoursome by adding more seasoning, herbs & spices. Meat, chicken & fish which has a sauce or gravy may be useful
- Cheese, pulses, lentils and milk are all good sources of protein and may be more palatable than meat

### Dealing with Loose Stools

This can be a side effect with COVID-19

- Try lower fibre foods such as white bread, plain cereals (rice crispies / cornflakes) & avoid foods with lots of fruits / vegetables
- Fluids are important – ensure at least 2 L per day