

Alzheimer's Disease—Eating

- Use simple, one-step instructions such as “pick up your fork,” and “put it in your mouth.” Repeat instructions often.
- Provide a calm environment at mealtime.
- If food intake is poor, provide nutritional snacks. Look for foods that trigger the persons desire to eat. Try to serve favorite foods often.
- Sometimes patients lose the ability to sense hot or cold. Take care not to let them burn their mouths.
- To reduce confusion, use a plate with no design. Choose a plate that is a different color than the place mat or cloth.
- Avoid trying to convince the person whether or not a meal has been eaten.
- Use a bendable straw or a cup with a top for the person who has difficulty drinking. Fill glasses only half full.
- If the person chokes easily, cut the food into very small pieces or puree. Use foods with soft consistency. Foods with “mixed consistency,” like soups, should be avoided.
- Limit the number of choices a person has to make.
- Remind the person to eat slowly. Encourage chewing each bite well.
- Put only one utensil and one food in front of the person at a time. If it is easier, use finger foods.
- Try using adaptive devices such as curved spoons, sectioned plates, or plates with a “lip” for persons who have difficulty using regular utensils.

(Adapted from an article by Wanda Shockley, M.Ed. R.D.)

Supporting Arkansas Families Since 1984

Alzheimer's Arkansas Programs and Services is an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a local volunteer Board of Directors.

Our services include:

- 24 hour telephone support
- Family and professional education
- Support groups for patients and caregivers
- Financial assistance
- Community awareness presentations
- Monthly newsletter and Lending Library

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