

## Tips to maximise the nutrition content of foods offered on the menu

This chapter provides suggestions on designing a nutritious menu which enables the amounts of food recommended in the *'Australian Guide to Health Eating'* to be met.

Food and drink should be further enriched or fortified with ingredients that increase the protein and calorie content of foods offered. Refer to chapter 17: 'Eating to Prevent Weight Loss' for ideas on how to fortify the menu further.

### MID-MEALS

An aged care home is more likely to meet resident nutritional needs if the number of opportunities for each resident to eat and drink is maximised. Examples include flexible mealtimes, out of hours food provision and nourishing mid-meals provided three times a day.

'Mid-meals provide an essential addition to the aged care home menu by adding flexibility, interest and variety'.<sup>(1)</sup> 'Food eaten at mid-meals should make a significant contribution to the nutritional requirements of poor eaters'.<sup>(2)</sup>

Many residents in aged care homes are poor eaters and have limited appetite which restricts the amount of food they can eat at any one time. For this reason it is essential that high calorie mid-meals are offered for morning tea, afternoon tea and supper.

A high calorie mid-meal is a snack that provides at least 150cal/serve.<sup>(1)</sup> It is preferable if the mid-meal also contributes reasonable amounts of protein (over 5g/serve is desirable).

The table on page 32 has a list of mid-meal items. For residents who are malnourished or eating poorly, offer mid-meals that will provide at least 150 calories\* and 5 grams of protein. Any food is suitable as a mid-meal. It can be a dessert, a serve of breakfast cereal or a bowl of soup. Whatever the resident likes can be given at morning tea, afternoon tea and supper.

As can be seen from the table over the page, a cup of tea or coffee and two oatmeal biscuits would provide only 80 calories and 1 gram of protein. A glass of milk and a small serve of fruit cake would provide 277 calories and 7.5 grams of protein.

Appendix 10: 'Mid-meal and Light Meal Ideas' lists a number of mid-meal suggestions that have proven popular in many aged care homes.



\* 1 calorie = 4.2 kilojoules

From the following list of mid-meal ideas try and get 5g protein and 150 calories.

ITEM	SERVING SIZE	KCAL	PROTEIN
Milk – full cream	150ml	100	5
High protein milkshake	150ml	182	7
So Good™ (Chocolate)	150ml	111	5
Juice (Apple)	150ml	61	0
Lemonade	150ml	50	0
Snak Pack™ (Vanilla)	140g	159	4
Madeira cake	50g	137	2
Fruit cake	50g	177	2.5
Mini muffin	45g	143	2
Chocolate biscuits	2 biscuits	196	2
Oatmeal biscuits	2	80	1
Dairy milk chocolate	Fun Size 18g bar	95	1.5
Potato chips	30g	157	2
Saos™	2 biscuits	72	2
Cheese portion	20g	100	5
Peanut butter	11g	68	3
Bread (White)	1 slice	73	2.5
Bread roll	1 roll/55g	138	5
Breakfast cereal	30g	109	3
Rolled oats	150g	56	1.5
Scrambled eggs (2 egg)	100g	148	10.4
Assorted sandwiches	2 brd	315	15
Ice-cream cup	50g	96	1.5
Custard	120g	123	4
Yoghurt – full cream	175g	178	7
Thick custard	80g	110	4
Fruche™	75g	90	4
Mousse	60g	100	3
Thin cream	60ml	210	0
Half English muffin butter and jam	50g	172	5
Scone with jam and cream	50	275	4
Muesli/cereal bar	One (30g)	120	2
Pikelets and margarine and jam	2 (30g)	150	2
Crumpet and spread	1	120	2
Fruit	1 piece/140g	90	0
Pureed fruit	120g	90	0
Sustagen™ (Vanilla)	150ml	150	9
Ensure™ (Vanilla)	150ml	157	6
Ensure Plus™ (Vanilla)	150ml	226	9
Ensure Pudding™ (Vanilla)	113g	170	4
Resource Fruit Beverage™	237ml	250	9
Two-Cal HN™	60ml	120	5
Nepro™	60ml	120	4
Arginaid Extra™ (Orange)	237ml	250	10.5
Cubitan™ (Vanilla)	200ml	250	20

Where food is provided by external food suppliers, it is vital that quality mid-meals are included when negotiating contracts. Resident access to food out of hours is crucial. Hunger through the night can lead to behavioural disturbances. Food should be available out of hours and floor staff should have access to provide residents with food and drink as required.