

Menu Cards

In a care home a typical day's lunch menu consists of a choice of main meal, for example roast chicken or cottage pie, and a lighter option such as sandwiches or jacket potatoes.

The day's menu choices have traditionally been written up on a menu board, with staff asking individuals at the beginning of the day what they would like for lunch.

The problem with this method is that people with dementia can lose the ability to think for themselves and will often say the same thing as the person sitting next to them, believing this is the correct answer to the question asked.



Activity:

Create picture menu cards showing the day's meal choices, as it is helpful to see what food looks like. People will choose what they think looks good. The words 'cottage pie' may not mean anything to a person with dementia, until they see and recognise exactly how this appears.

The menu cards can be produced by sticking pictures of food onto card. It doesn't have to be costly because pictures of food are fairly easy to find if you don't want to take your own photos. Old cookery books, magazines, websites and digital photographs provide excellent sources of culinary images. You can start to build up a bank of pictures.

Example Photos



Shepherds Pie



Sandwich



Roast Chicken



Fish & Chips



Activity: To stimulate interest in food consider taking small groups to the supermarket and creating a second kitchen for residents to use safely. Both of these would be excellent reminiscence tools.