



Prioritising Wellbeing

Top Tips for Weekly Nutritional Activities Family Carers and Friends

Food programmes

Your relative may enjoy watching some of the many cooking programmes on television. These could be discussed afterwards using questions such as:

- Which dish was their favourite?
- Which didn't they like and why?
- Do they think the Chefs had good cooking skills?
- Who is their favourite TV Chef?
- Which kitchen gadgets were being used during the programme? This could lead to a discussion of how cooking methods have changed over the years

Reminiscence

Food makes a great topic for reminiscence in itself and can also be linked to many other reminiscence topics such as:

- Childhood – school meals, favourite sweets (some of the brands may still be available today), party foods (recreate a childhood birthday party), birthday cakes and buns
- Food Advertising – posters and packaging from days gone by.
- Celebration foods – wedding breakfast, special treat foods and special meals out

Recreate your own cookery programme

You could recreate a simple TV format such as 'Ready, Steady, Cook'. You could get a selection of food items in a bag and show them to your relative and ask what two course meal they would make from the ingredients. You could have some rules around what other store cupboard items they are allowed to use. If possible, you could make the actual dishes for you both to taste.

Baking and cooking

If your relative was an accomplished cook in the past, may have made many meals homemade from scratch.

Providing activities based on cooking or baking can really help to provide a sense of purpose and enjoyment. If your relative is living with dementia they may respond well to simple food preparation tasks. Simple demonstrations and action based prompts may be more useful than verbal cues. Equipment such as a bread maker or real coffee machine can create wonderful smells which may help to stimulate appetites and interest in food. Food smells may also trigger memories in some and can lead to interesting discussions.

Obviously cooking and baking can introduce some potential hazards such as heat and sharp knives. However, there are many recipes which are simple to follow and do not require any 'cooking'. NAPA's No Bake Cooking booklet provides lots of ideas for recipes which require little or no heat (you can find details at the end of this publication or on the NAPA website www.napa-activities.co.uk).

The 'cooking' activity could be broadened into a much wider activity and include choosing a recipe. This could be tied in with a celebration as well writing a shopping list and going out to the shops to buy the ingredients.

Gifts could be made from some foods such as truffles or decorated buns and biscuits for Easter or birthdays.

A food beginning with...

This is a very easy game and can be adapted to any topic or theme. Take it turns to think of a food beginning with the next letter of the alphabet. Alternatively, you could put the letters of the alphabet in a box or hat and ask your relative to select a letter. To make it harder you could restrict it to a particular type of food e.g. vegetables or cakes.

That tastes of?

You could develop a quiz or game based on the different tastes of food. Small amounts of different foods could be prepared, and you could take it in turns to be blindfolded and asked to guess what food or drink they think it is through tasting and smelling it. Make sure your relative is comfortable with being blindfolded and make sure the food isn't hot or too hard or sharp. You could give a bit of a warning before they taste each food such as "this is a liquid", or "this is crunchy".

Food quiz

You could also do a picture based quiz on a food theme such as different types of cakes or breads. You may be able to find pictures on the internet or in magazines that you could print or cut out to form a quiz, there are many such quizzes in the Member's Only section of the NAPA website (www.napa-activities.co.uk). This could also prompt conversation about favourite types of foods and memories.

Fruits from around the world

Tasting fruits from around the world is a good way to experience different flavours and textures as well as being a very healthy option. You could buy and prepare various exotic fruits from around the world for your relative to taste. These could be puréed for those who may need a softer texture. You could look at a globe or a map of the world and ask your relative to guess where the fruits have come from, you could make pictures of the fruits to stick on the map. Each fruit and location could then be discussed. How are the fruits grown? What do they look like on the tree/plant? Has your relative visited or lived in that country?

The fruits could also be made into smoothies and different recipes tried out!

If you would like to discuss the information included in this resource, please call the NAPA Helpline; our free and confidential activity support service.

