

MAKE MEALTIMES EASIER

Learn more about food, eating, and Alzheimer's at <http://www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-food-eating.asp>

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TIPS

-  **Limit distractions.**
Serve meals in quiet surroundings, away from the television and other distractions.
-  **Keep the table setting simple.**
Avoid placing items on the table — such as table arrangements or plastic fruit — that might distract or confuse the person. Use only the utensils needed for the meal.
-  **Distinguish food from the plate.**
Changes in visual and spatial abilities may make it tough for someone with dementia to distinguish food from the plate or the plate from the table. It can help to use white plates or bowls with a contrasting color placemat. Avoid patterned dishes, tablecloths and placemats.
-  **Check the food temperature.**
A person with dementia might not be able to tell if something is too hot to eat or drink. Always test the temperature of foods and beverages before serving.

-  **Be flexible to food preferences.**
Keep long-standing personal preferences in mind when preparing food, and be aware that a person with dementia may suddenly develop new food preferences or reject foods that were liked in the past.
-  **Give the person plenty of time to eat.**
Remind him or her to chew and swallow carefully. Keep in mind that it may take an hour or longer to finish eating.
-  **Eat together.**
Make meals an enjoyable social event so everyone looks forward to the experience. Research suggests that people eat better when they are in the company of others.
-  **Keep in mind the person may not remember when or if he or she ate.**
If the person continues to ask about eating breakfast, consider serving several breakfasts — juice, followed by toast, followed by cereal

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alz.org | 800.272.3900

For more information, email Research@flhealth.gov or
Contact your local County Health Department

Additional resources may also be found by visiting:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/provider-and-partner-resources/research/HealthyBrainInitiative1/index.html>

