



WILTSHIRE
FARM FOODS
PROFESSIONAL

Specialist Nutrition Made Easy!

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Specialist Nutrition Made Easy....

Good nutrition plays a critical role in the health and wellbeing of care home residents. And one of the biggest challenges facing care homes is how to cater for residents who have specialist nutrition needs and meet personalised dietary pathways in a way that delivers a high-quality dining experience that is easy and cost effective.



Ian Stone
Chief Operating Officer,
Wiltshire Farm Foods Professional

As every home knows all too well; ‘one size does not fit all’. Residents can be living with anything from life-long intolerances and allergies through to swallowing difficulties (a condition otherwise known as dysphagia), which occurs in 51-60% of care home residents and is a secondary condition associated with dementia, stroke, Parkinson’s disease, head and neck cancers, along with many other neurological conditions.

And as part of the apetito family, which is the market leader in pre-prepared meal solutions for the care home market, we have been delighted to launch Wiltshire Farm Foods Professional as a welcome solution to care homes that are not taking the apetito full-service solution.

Wiltshire Farm Foods Professional gives every home the opportunity to benefit from the world-leading range of specialist nutrition products for those individuals who may be living with dysphagia or need a diet that is ‘free from’ the fourteen known allergens, or simply have different cultural needs and preferences. There is also an extensive range of meals for those residents who may be at risk of malnutrition.

And now, Wiltshire Farm Foods Professional has created this Guide for ‘Specialist Nutrition Made Easy’, to share the knowledge and expertise that we’ve developed since we launched our first texture modified range of meals, over 13 years ago.

We’ll look at best practice on catering for residents with dysphagia, dementia, and allergies and answer some of your most frequently asked questions.

Wiltshire Farm Foods Professional’ Guide to Specialist Nutrition Made Easy has been created to help you, and your care home, ensure residents with specialist dietary needs are getting the nutrition they need to ensure their wellbeing and combat malnutrition.

You can order our world-leading specialist nutrition meals through Wiltshire Farm Foods Professional to work in harmony with kitchens which may be providing a fresh-cook meal service. Our delicious and extensive choice of meals are available without any contractual commitment and no delivery charges.

We hope that this Guide will open up new opportunities for you – as a care home provider – facing the economic and societal challenges we all face in today’s market. We are here to help you find high quality solutions that can help your business.

Ian

CATERING FOR DEMENTIA DINING



Sophia Cornelius

Development Dietitian at apetito

Regardless of the size of your home, catering for residents living with dementia can be highly complex. Mealtimes can be a real challenge for care homes trying to deliver a quality dining experience for those living with the condition. Residents can lose concentration, forget to eat and drink, and struggle to use cutlery or cups.

Dementia often results in difficulties chewing and swallowing as the condition progresses. Residents' can become reluctant to eat and the resulting potential loss of nutrition is a factor for concern.

Dysphagia is managed by modifying the texture of food and fluids to reduce the risk of aspiration and choking. Texture modification alters the consistency of food making it easier to chew or eliminating the need for chewing altogether. The level of texture modification will be dependent on the severity of the dysphagia and the individual's needs.

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) is a global initiative that has standardised the terminology and definitions used to describe texture modified foods and liquids.

The framework provides common terminology to describe various consistencies of food and fluids and specifies testing criteria that can be performed by anyone using standard kitchen equipment such as a spoon or fork. The framework includes a continuum of 8 levels, the following definitions apply to food thickness:

- **Level 3/Liquidised**
- **Level 4/Purée**
- **Level 5/Minced & Moist**
- **Level 6/Soft & Bite Sized**
- **Level 7/Easy to Chew**

Creating food to the right texture requires catering teams to work on adapting the texture, consistency, and viscosity of food (and drinks).

For catering teams in the care home sector who are already struggling with rising costs and staff shortages, having to potentially make several different textures of dishes, along with other meals puts immeasurable strain on staff.

Not only is DIY texture modified food time consuming but it's hard for staff to ensure they're creating the correct and safe texture. Safety is of paramount importance for care homes and reducing business risk and giving peace of mind to all concerned cannot be underestimated.

The visual appeal of food is also vital. It is essential to 'dining with dignity' and key to driving appetite. It can be extremely challenging for a busy and understaffed catering team to make texture modified food that looks appealing and often residents that require softer and pureed food are served blended food, totally unrecognisable as a dish.

Opting for pre-made texture modified meals which resemble the food other residents are eating – recognisable food where each component is shaped to look like what the diner is eating, helps to increase consumption and encourage individuals to continue to dine socially.

By using a pre-prepared solution, care homes can see a reduction in preparation time, plus as they are pre-blended there's no bacterial risk from blending equipment and handling. These ready-made options are also IDDSI compliant, reducing the need to test texture and consistency of meals against the IDDSI guidelines.

apetito has a range of over 100 texture modified dishes, providing Level 3, 4, 5 and 6 meals, as well as a range of dishes that are tested against the criteria for Level 7 Easy to Chew. From classics like Sausage and Chips to curries and desserts, there are dishes that suit all preferences. We also have options such as toasties or beans on toast which work great as a breakfast, lighter lunch or a snack as well as festive choices across all levels.

apetito's products all comply with the BDA Nutrition and Hydration Digest (1), which ensures even those with a reduced appetite continue to receive all the nutrients they need, reducing the risk of malnutrition.

Every resident should be able to dine with dignity and by using pre-prepared texture modified meals, care homes are able ensure that residents living with dysphagia can enjoy mealtimes without having to compromise on flavour, visual appeal and most importantly, safety.

Another and one of the most common cognitive difficulties that is seen with dementia is apraxia – the inability of the body

to respond to messages that are normally sent from the brain, such as telling the hand to move a fork to the mouth.

It is unclear exactly how many residents live with apraxia and the cause is not always evident, but nevertheless it can be debilitating for the individual and has historically led to an increased need for assisted feeding. There are a number of ways a team can help make mealtimes an easier and pleasant experience including introducing:

- Specially shaped cups, with one or two handles, of different weights, materials, transparencies, and designs
- Cutlery of different shapes, sizes, depths, and materials. Shorter-handled cutlery is easier to manage, and handgrips or specially shaped handles may help some people to use a utensil.
- Plates and bowls which do not slip, which have higher sides to prevent spillage, or which are angled to make access to food easier
- Insulated crockery which keeps food hot if mealtimes are lengthy
- Non-slip mats which support crockery
- Special straws which can help those with a weaker suck, or 'nosey cups' to prevent the head from tilting too far back.

Using finger foods that residents can easily pick up and eat, encouraging independence at mealtimes and preventing

unintended weight loss is another important nutritional strategy.

It's why we developed our Finger Food Bites – a range that helps care homes provide a positive, inclusive, dining experience for residents with dementia. The range means those living with dementia and co-ordination difficulties can feed themselves nutritionally balanced meals in one bite without having to struggle to pick up cutlery.

Finger Foods Bites allow residents the freedom to pick up and put down a complete hot meal with no mess and with minimal residue left on fingers. Furthermore, they can be enjoyed whilst sitting down, or if a resident is 'on the move'.

Opting for pre-prepared texture modified meals and nutritious finger foods are great way to ensure provision of high-quality, and importantly safe meals to residents, which also give the added bonus of giving staff more time to ensure they're able to create a dining environment conducive to encouraging eating and drinking.



1. British Dietetic Association (BDA) The Nutrition and Hydration Digest 2nd Edition Improving outcomes through food and beverage services (2019). (online). Available at: <https://www.bda.uk.com/uploads/assets/c24296fe-8b4d-4626-aeebb6cf2d92fccc/NutritionHydrationDigest.pdf> accessed 25/04/2023



What is IDDSI?

The 'International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative' also known as IDDSI is a global standard that describes texture modified foods and liquids. It is the result of a collaboration between a range of industry professionals, including Dietitians, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists.

The IDDSI framework consists of a continuum of 8 levels (0-7). Levels are identified by text labels, numbers, and colour codes to improve safety and identification.



What Wiltshire Farm Foods Professional is offering...

We've created a full and varied range of over 100 nutritionally balanced and visually appealing meals, desserts and snacks that cater for a wide range of dietary needs. We have reviewed and improved meal texture, taste, nutrition and appearance, alongside IDDSI compliance, ensuring every product is safe and enjoyable to eat.

What were the changes?

In 2019 the IDDSI framework replaced the National Descriptors that were used, which ran from textures B – E. The IDDSI framework consists of eight levels, ranging from zero to seven and is the first framework of its type to include drinks and foods together.

IDDSI has been developed so there is global standardised terminology and definitions for texture modified foods and thickened liquids. It will improve the safety and care for individuals with dysphagia (difficulty or discomfort in swallowing, as a symptom of disease) of all ages, in all care settings, and across all cultures.

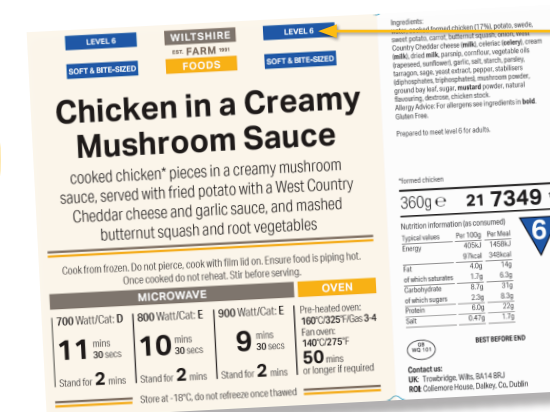


Label Info

Our labels feature the IDDSI levels to help you easily identify textures.

Not only does the IDDSI framework make categorising meals more consistent, it provides new testing methods to help you ensure food is prepared and served to the correct texture for a person's specific needs.

It is therefore important to understand how to recognise the correct meal for the resident.



1

The IDDSI level and name are on the left and right.

2

The IDDSI symbol is on the bottom right of the label including the level of the product and the co-ordinating colour.



Why is it important?

Dysphagia affects people of all ages in the UK. Resident's require food and drink that is in line with their diagnosis by a Speech and Language Therapist, to ensure they get the correct consistency of meal. Previously, with the National Descriptors, it was hard to access the exact specification of each category. IDDSI has more detailed testing to ensure resident's receive a meal suitable for their condition.

What are the implications of getting it wrong?

The risk to resident safety and wellbeing from swallowing difficulties can be very serious. If a resident is given food not suitable for their condition it can cause blocking of the resident's windpipe or for the resident to aspirate food and liquid into the lungs, leading to infections and aspiration pneumonia. In the most severe cases this can cause death.

What should you do if you are unsure?

If you are in any doubt about a resident's condition or which meal is suitable for them, please contact your Speech and Language team or one of the nursing staff. Wiltshire Farm Foods Professional meals, please contact us by telephone on 01225 308829 or email at info@wffpro.co.uk



Your Questions Answered...

by Sophia Cornelius, Development Dietitian at apetito,
and Maia Fergus- O'Grady, Senior Category Executive for
Specialist Nutrition at apetito.



Below are some questions that we are most frequently asked along with the answers given, which we hope will help care providers deliver the best possible nutrition and dining experience.

Question: I would like to know about the type of food that should be given to people with dementia?

Answer: Of course, this is a complex area and one I am sure that you will see a lot of when you're working in care.

The needs of people living with dementia will vary widely - some experience poor appetite, some forget to eat & drink & need encouragement & support/assistance and some favour eating with their hands ('finger food') as they begin to struggle with coordination/dexterity issues.

For people who want to, eating with their hands can help to maintain independence and may help to improve nutritional intake.

apetito have a range of 'finger food' meals and I'd encourage you to check out resources from organisations such as Alzheimer's UK. My take home advice would be to take a resident-centred approach - try and get to know the person and their likes/dislikes, try and understand the pattern of their preferred eating & drinking. E.g., do they eat well in the morning? Maybe more so at night? Do they prefer sweet or savoury foods? Involve the family and keep in mind that things can change for people day to day or week to week. I hope this helps - it can be a challenging area and one that needs staff in a care home to work together with one another (e.g., kitchen staff, care staff).

Question: As a smaller care home (we have under 30 beds) and we don't want to sign a contract for large scale provision when our requirements vary week to week. Can we buy specialist nutrition meals as we go?

Answer: Absolutely!

We recognise the changing needs of your residents, which is why our specialist nutrition ranges don't require a contract. This flexibility ensures that you can easily adapt to residents' evolving dietary needs and preferences without being locked into a long-term commitment. If a resident transitions to a different texture or their preferences change, you can order as needed, preventing stock build-up and minimising waste. This approach not only saves money but also ensures that residents always receive the most suitable and fresh meals, enhancing their nutrition and dining experience.

Question: How can we make sure we're giving our residents with dementia the right nutrition and how can we record that effectively?

Answer: *First, we need to know what the residents' needs are before we can come up with a tangible plan to meet their nutritional needs and its going to vary for everybody. So, you may have someone that's come from a more supported living environment that's coming into a more care or nursing home environment, and it's good to involve the people who have been involved in the person's care before that transition.*

Friends and family of the resident will be your absolute oracle when it comes to finding out information about dietary preferences – what they like to eat on a Friday, a Sunday, religious and cultural preferences, and allergies. Thinking about documentation, I know it feels like we're filling out forms all the time but it's important when it comes to nutrition. Screening tools – they're simple, they're validated and if you can get people trained in using them properly, they really work and get help identify people in need, which can lead onto that individualised person-centred care plan.

Question: I'm a manager at a home for nearly 70 residents, and struggle knowing how best to manage standard meals alongside the needs of residents with dysphagia at the same mealtime. Do you recommend trying to serve the same pureed food to match the standard meal?

Answer: *I can appreciate this challenge - it can be difficult to meet the varying nutritional needs of residents, particularly when there are complex requirements like dysphagia.*

My advice would be yes, do try and aim for residents to be offered similar meals even if they do need texture modified food. This can help with planning, minimising waste and importantly, helping residents with dysphagia to avoid feeling isolated different due to their dietary needs.

Family members will appreciate their loved ones being included in the usual menu patterns of care homes, e.g., fish Friday or a roast on a Sunday and if you can demonstrate that you're doing this for all residents it should be noticed by CQC too.

Question: What should I do if the resident declines all the options on the menu and only wants sandwiches especially if her blood sugar is very high?

Answer: *Ultimately, we want to ensure that residents are eating enough to maintain a healthy weight, whilst adhering to their dietary preferences where possible. I would encourage having a discussion with the resident, or the family if this is not possible due to limited communication, to try to understand whether there's anything else she'd be open to trying, as we have several individual meal ranges, such as our Finger Food range, that provide her with a nutritionally balanced meal option that can still be eaten with her hands.*

If sandwiches are the only option that the resident willing to eat, it's best to continue to provide these for her, to minimise the risk of malnutrition and honour her choices.

You can offer nutritious fillings such as tuna, cheese, or egg, with salad to increase micro-nutrients. I would also encourage a 'little and often' approach, whereby you can use nutrient-rich drink and snack options throughout the day to provide a more well-rounded food offering and try to balance blood sugars. A diabetes specialist nurse can also advise on balancing blood sugar levels. The British Dietetic Association 'Food Facts' sheets may provide useful support and are freely available on their website.



THE IMPORTANCE OF CATERING FOR ALLERGENS AND THE IMPACT OF NATASHA'S LAW

The introduction of Natasha's Law in October 2021, following the tragic death of fifteen-year-old Natasha Ednan-Laperouse in 2016, was a hugely significant day for both allergen sufferers and food operations.

The law legally requires all food businesses to clearly provide full ingredients lists and allergen labelling on all foods that are pre-packaged on the premises. The legislation was introduced to ensure that consumers – and particularly those with allergies – can clearly see what is in the food they buy.

Catering for allergies is becoming an increasingly larger issue and operation for businesses serving food, as the number of people with food allergies in the UK continues to rise.

One in four people have now been diagnosed with food allergies and residents in care homes are no exception to this. Care homes have a duty of care toward their residents, and all care homes will have residents with diverse dietary requirements, whether that be allergies, intolerances, personal choice, or religious preference.

With an estimated 408,000 care home residents in the UK [1], there are a lot of different dietary needs care homes need to cater for.

Being that residents in care homes are some of the most vulnerable in society, Natasha's Law continues to serve as a salient reminder to all care vulnerable in society, Natasha's Law continues to serve as a salient reminder to all care homes about the importance of being vigilant at every turn when catering for residents with allergies.

Vigilance around the management of allergies does not end with labelling and legislation, it's vital your food service operations have a clear allergen policy with a stringent training and development plan. Staff must be trained to ensure they are fully allergy-aware and understand any processes they are expected to undertake when preparing or serving food that contains allergens.

Enormous care needs to be taken at every stage of food's preparation, from the storing of ingredients to the preparation and serving of meals but that's not always easy.

Even if dishes don't include a specific allergen, there is still the risk of cross-contamination when prepared in a busy care home kitchen by staff who handle food containing allergens. It's important that food preparation areas are segregated to ensure safety.

Increasingly, care homes are turning to a prepared meal service, which not only ensures consistency of cost and menus, but helps homes manage allergen needs and reduces the risk of cross-contamination, making catering for allergens easy and stress-free.

Because Natasha's Law now requires pre-prepared meals to have all ingredients clearly labelled and any allergens highlighted, when using a prepared meal service, it's easy to order and serve free-from dishes with great variety and choice, that care homes can be confident are safe for their residents to eat.

Opting for a solution such as a pre-prepared meal service, will not only enable care homes to serve residents a variety of safe, nutritious, and tasty dishes that are suitable for all dietary requirements but take away stress and concern from staff when it comes to catering for allergens.

[1] <https://www.carehome.co.uk/advice/care-home-stats-number-of-settings-population-workforce>



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN **MADE WITHOUT** AND **FREE FROM**

Understanding the distinction of made without and free from is vital when catering for residents with allergies. It is one of the most important aspects of cooking safely for kitchen teams to understand and ensure any risk is minimised.

Although there is no specific law covering 'free from' claims (except for gluten free), free from claims are regulated in accordance with the provisions of General Food Law and the regulations on Food Information to Consumers.

These laws and regulations state that food must be safe for consumption and that product information is not misleading and is accurately communicated.

Free from meals are those that are free from the stated allergen and have undergone testing to verify this claim (i.e., there are no traces of the stated allergen remaining or the amount is within the legal threshold).

Regulatory guidance recommends that free from meals and products are completely free from the specified allergen, which may be a singular allergen, a combination of a few common allergens, or all the 14 main allergens.

That is, that the product recipe does not use any ingredients or compound ingredients (including additives and processing aids) containing the specified allergen which it is claiming to be free from.

Additionally, to claim 'free from', a product should be made in an environment following safe allergen management procedures, and a sampling and testing process that is robust, validated, and traceable should be in place.

Meals and products that deliberately exclude certain allergens from the recipe (but do not undergo laboratory testing) cannot be considered free from. Instead, they would be categorised as "made without" instead of 'free from'. They may be made at the same time – and in the same production unit – as other meals, which may contain allergens.

For example, close scientific analysis can occasionally reveal a speck of powdered milk, or similar, in a meal made without dairy. This may be because it has floated in the air, whether in a kitchen or a bigger production unit, and into a dairy-free meal.

When meals are cooked from scratch on site, it is vital to ensure the separation of foods which are at risk. Plus, additional factors need to be considered such as the opportunity for unintended cross-contamination of foods and how individual dietary requirements are met within a larger pool of residents.



Removing the risk of cross contamination

Cross contamination poses significant risk for residents with severe allergies. It occurs when a 'safe food' has been exposed to an allergen containing food, for example, if a butter knife was dipped back into the butter after being used on wheat containing bread, this butter would be contaminated and therefore for someone with coeliac disease who requires a gluten free diet should not be used.

Cross-contamination can occur at any point when food is being handled, including preparation, cooking, storage and serving, therefore can be very challenging to avoid, especially if care homes are scratch cooking for residents with varying dietary needs and severe allergies.

The risks can be significantly reduced when using pre-prepared meals as they will have been produced in a strictly controlled environment, safely packed and labelled. For added reassurance, at apetito, we see the importance in testing a sample from every batch of Gluten Free and Free From meals for allergens cooked in our kitchens in our accredited on-site laboratory.

Our advice to care homes is to be ever vigilant around the construction on their menus to ensure the dietary needs of each resident are met in the safest possible way, with prepared meals a great option to achieve this.



Our award-winning menu is now even better!

Creating **tasty, easy** dishes in the **right texture for those with swallowing difficulties** is our priority at Wiltshire Farm Foods Professional. We're always looking to take our already **world leading** texture modified meals from strength to strength, and now we're very proud to announce exciting improvements across our entire Purée menu.

Our new **Purée** dishes **surpass any we have created before**, from our **Minced** and **Soft & Bite-Sized** menus too. **Quality** ingredients, fantastic **flavours**, made with care to be the **perfect texture**.



Effortless meals for all



Carefully created
Dine with confidence, safe in the knowledge that each dish is created in line with the latest texture guidance from the NHS.*



Brilliantly balanced
Thanks to the input of our expert dietitians, our meals meet a wide range of nutritional needs.



Unsure which texture is right for you?
Please speak to your healthcare professional who will be able to advise you.

*iddsi.org

Sensational new sides



INTRODUCING OUR BEST EVER LEVEL 4 PURÉE MENU

Our talented team of chefs have **excelled** themselves, through hard work and **innovation**, to create our **new and improved** Purée menu. It's our **best yet!**



32
BEST EVER
Purée Meals

Perfect pies



Stand-out sauces





Our Fourth Royal Honour

Not only do we believe in enhancing health and wellbeing through our meals, but we are also dedicated to limiting our environmental impact and prioritising the health of our planet. Our commitment to ethics and sustainability is the reason that we were awarded our fourth Royal Honour; The King's Awards for Enterprise in Sustainable Development 2024. It was awarded in recognition of our commitment to conducting business that positively impacts the environment, society and economy, and we are one of only 29 businesses recognised for their work in this space.

Ordering is easy and delivery is **FREE!**

Your friendly local driver will be there with your order as and when you need it, making it easy to plan the week's meals.



Call your local team for a
FREE no obligation tasting
on 01225 308829 or
register today
at wffpro.co.uk