





Our experienced Dietetic team help Aged Care Homes with menus, recipes, nutrition training as well as one-on-one nutritional assessment with your residents. Reach out to our Lead Dietitian, Kiarra to find out more about how we can support your Residents.

OSCAR Group

AGED CARE OUR DIETITIANS

Mark these dates in your diary!











Food Safety Training



FOOD SAFETY LEVEL 1
IN CLASS & VIRTUAL SESSIONS



FOOD SAFETY SUPERVISOR
IN CLASS & VIRTUAL

Enrol

HERE



FOOD SAFETY REFRESHER VIRTUAL

Training



FOOD ALLERGY TRAINING VIRTUAL



IDDSI TRAINING VIRTUAL

Events

COMPLETE OUR SURVEY

Have your say about what events you want to see in 2026

Food Days



Coffee Day



Bread Day Pasta Day





Sandwich Day



Baklava Day



Fairy Bread Day



Cookie Day



Gravy Day

www.oscarcaregroup.com.au/training



RESIDENT NUTRITION

SUPPLEMENT DRINKS The liquid solution or liquid pollution to ageing?

Residents are often faced with inadequate nutrition due to poor dentition, lack of taste, swallowing issues, polypharmacy, low appetite, cognitive impairment, disabilities, and increased nutrient needs due to diseases and infections.

Consequently, this may lead to an increased risk of malnutrition which may then be associated with poorer health outcomes. Often, residents may be prescribed with commercial supplement drinks to assist with targeting the nutrient requirements. However, these supplement drinks are often misused and may cause other challenges.

We face a lot of challenges with overuse of supplements in aged care.

In the Aged Care homes, commercial supplements are seen as a convenient quick fix to address nutrition concerns or tick a box that something is being done if a resident is losing weight. However, the overuse of commercial supplements may be doing more harm than good.

So, why are the residents being prescribed **commercial supplement drinks as a go-to** then? Often, it could be due to lack of education, understanding and clinical oversight where healthcare providers rely on commercial supplements without an experienced aged care Dietitian's thorough review.

If there is an overuse of commercial supplements, what does this mean?

FOR THE RESIDENTS

Overuse of commercial supplements can shift the focus away from whole foods that provide proper nutrients. Other factors that may impact on the resident's quality of life include:

- · Reduced enjoyment for whole food
- Reduced appetite
- Reduced social engagement during the dining experience
- Nutrient toxicity, especially for those who have clinical conditions such as kidney damage, gastrointestinal disturbances and diabetes
- The above may lead to nutrient deficiencies or increase the risk of malnutrition.

FOR THE AGED CARE HOME

Not only does overuse of commercial supplements impact on the residents, but it can also have significant implications to the aged care home too.

- Increased healthcare costs
 the high reliance of supplement drinks may lead to
 nutrient toxicity, unintentional weight gain or other
 issues which can cause further medical complications
- Supplement drink waste
 not all supplements are properly consumed by the
 residents for several reasons, which can then
 lead to wastage or the supplements being ineffective
- Lack of individualised care
 if most residents are receiving the same supplement
 drinks, there is less of an effect of the home addressing
 the resident's specific dietary needs
- Negative perception of the home's care
 when families are trying to find the 'right' home for
 their family member, having good quality meals are
 important for families. If there is a high reliance on
 supplement drinks to address dietary needs rather than
 through food, this may deter families.



NUTRITION SUPPLEMENT DRINKS 4

The pros and cons of commercial supplements drinks

The benefits of supplements

Firstly, there is a place for commercial supplements when required. Commercial supplements are recommended to be used as a last resort when all other options are exhausted.

Commercial supplements can be beneficial, the key is this should only be done after a thorough evaluation and assessment of the resident.

Supplement drinks may assist those with:

- very poor oral intake where supplement drinks provide energy and protein in a smaller volume
- · chewing difficulties
- increased energy and protein needs on top of their diet
- cognitive impairment who may recognise supplement drinks as 'special drinks' or completely refuse all meals

Additionally, the small pact bottle with high energy and protein is convenient for nursing staff and carers to provide nutrients easily during medication rounds and is portable when required.

The 'Food First' Approach

The 'Food First' Approach is a strategy that prioritises obtaining nutrients through food rather than the reliance of commercial supplemented food and drinks.

The main goal of the 'food first' approach aims to provide a balanced diet that allows the residents to receive sufficient nutritional needs in the form vitamins, minerals, proteins and fibre naturally. In doing so, this promotes better digestive health, addresses nutritional deficiencies, promotes quality of life and mealtime experience.

This strategy is sustainable and a more cost-effective method which can be maintained long-term as opposed to supplement drinks. Food fortification and HEHP foods are the best food first approach solutions to address the risk of weight loss and malnutrition in aged care.

Commercial supplements are not a quick fix. They **should not** be used to tick a box.

The disadvantages of supplements

TASTE

Our Dietitians in aged care often hear of residents not enjoying the taste of commercial supplements. Another major concern is residents becoming tired of the taste with lack of variety of flavours in the day, even if a resident does enjoy the taste to start. It leads to taste fatigue and refusal of supplement drinks.

EARLY SATIETY

Due to the high concentration of energy and protein (and for some supplements, high fibre content), this may cause early satiety and especially for those who already have a low appetite. By promoting high usage of supplement drinks, this may displace regular food and drinks during mealtimes.

Many staff also provide supplement drinks prior to a meal being served, so residents may feel full when a meal is served, and not eat their meals, becoming a poor cycle on repeat.

FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY

When prescribing medication and supplement drinks, some people may see it as a simple fix to assist with nutrient adequacy. Therefore, there is a higher reliance on these drinks rather than determining the underlying issues to inadequate oral intake.

SUPPLIER ISSUES

There may be issues with the supplier or having certain supplement drinks out of stock. Aged Care homes may also have a contract with certain supplement companies which limits the variety of supplement drinks to choose from.

FINANCIAL COST

Commercial supplements are expensive, with one bottle already costing around \$3–6 AUD. Some residents may require three bottles per day, which means it can cost into the thousands per year.

There are quick and easy ways to encourage the food first approach and oral intake.

ORGANISE REGULAR EDUCATIONS FOR STAFF

on Malnutrition, Food Fortification, HEHP foods and the Food First Approach.

BUILD RAPPORT WITH THE RESIDENTS

to understand their eating behaviours, preferences, likes and dislikes.

OFFER HEHP

(high energy and protein) snacks first such as yoghurt, custard, cheese and biscuits, eggs etc.

OPTIMISE ALL MEALTIMES

from breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner to supper with extra high energy and high protein snacks, and food fortification where possible.

REACH OUT TO AN OSCAR CARE GROUP

Accredited Practising Dietitian who can help and provide the support you need! We can assist your home with a fantastic foundation on training the Food First Approach, reviewing your Nutrition and Hydration policy, supplement reviews and reducing or ceasing unnecessary commercial supplements, to focus on the Food First Approach.

Your Aged Care Home could be featured

HERE

in the next edition*

Enter by
DEC 1, 2025
for your chance
to be featured
in the Summer
Edition

To submit your Aged Care Home, go to www.oscarcaregroup.com.au/the-scoop/aged-care-feature-apply

We love seeing the amazing food and passion you provide to your Residents – the dedication and care is outstanding. So let's inspire each other. We're offering to highlight one Aged Care Home in the next edition of The Scoop. It's absolutely free too.

To enter, simply submit your details and photos via the website or email our Marketing team. There's no guarantee that your Aged Care Home will be featured, but not to worry, we're running this throughout 2026. The most inspiring photos and descriptions will be selected.

*Details

- This is open to all Australian Aged Care Homes
- There is no cost to be featured.
- By submitting photos, you are providing OSCAR
 Care Group with permission to use these photos on
 our website, social media and emails including if
 any persons are in the photo.
- PDF Proof of the layout will be submitted to the winners prior to publishing.
- Homes are selected based on how inspiring they are with the photos and descriptions they provide.



RECIPE

Baked Pears in Sherry Syrup

Baked Pears are a timeless favorite that has earned its place on every seasonal menu within Aged Care. In summer, residents delighted in the caramelised pears with a scoop of vanilla ice cream, while in winter, the warm, melt-in-the-mouth fruit, spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg, brought comfort and joy.

INGREDIENTS SERVES 50 RESIDENTS		
2 cans, approx. 3kg each	Pears, Halved and in juice, Half-drained	
2 cups	Brown sugar	
2 cups	Sherry	
250 g	Butter, softened or melted	
2 tbsp	Vanilla essence	
1 tbsp	Ground Cinnamon	
TO SERVE		
3.75L	Ice Cream	

CONTAINS Milk, Alcohol



This simply delicious baked pears recipe is brought to you by our Food Safety Auditor and Trainer, and experienced Aged Care Chef, Narmada. During her time in Aged Care, this recipe was an absolute must have with the residents.

METHOD

CRUMBLE

- 1. Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced).
- 2. Lightly grease one large baking tray.
- Arrange drained pear halves cut side up in the dishes in a single layer.
- In a large saucepan over low heat, melt butter. Add half of juices from can, brown sugar, sherry, vanilla essence, and cinnamon
- Stir until the sugar is just dissolved and the syrup is smooth (do not boil).
- 6. Pour the syrup evenly over the pears to ensure all are coated.
- 7. Bake for 25–30 minutes until warm and slightly caramelised.
- 8. Serve warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

TEXTURE MODIFICATION SUITABILITY* with recipe edits



REGULAR EASY TO CHEW

Serve tender pears with custard. No ice-cream or syrup.



OFT & BITE SIZED

Ensure tender pear is cut into <1.5x1.5cm pieces. Serve with custard. No ice-cream or syrup.



MINCED & MOIST

Ensure tender pear is finely minced to <4mm x 4mm. Serve with ice custard. No ice-cream.



PUREED

Puree pear with syrup and pass through sieve to remove any fibres, lumps or bits. Serve with custard. No ice cream.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION	PER SERVE (183G)	PER 100G
Energy (kJ)	967	527
Protein (g)	2	1
Total Fat (g)	8	5
Saturated Fat (g)	6	3
Carbohydrate (g)	32	17
Sugars (g)	31	17
Dietary Fibre (g)	4	2
Sodium (mg)	27	15

*Refer to the full OSCAR recipe and ensure food testing to align with IDDSI guidelines.

NOTE: replace sherry with apple/pear juice for non-alcoholic version



RESIDENT NUTRITION

How to create a sense of food nostalgia

Food nostalgia can be a powerful tool to connect with one's past, especially for those living in aged care homes or with dementia. In a way, food nostalgia can allow you to 'taste travel', remembering times gone by as you enjoy a meal, snack, or drink.

Throughout the aging process, it's normal for an individual's sense of taste and smell to reduce and change over time. However, the emotional effect that familiar foods can bring remains unchanged.

Poor appetite is also common, making it harder to maintain a healthy weight. By creating nostalgic food experiences, a person's desire to eat can increase, and both their emotional and physical health will benefit.

In aged care homes, meals can become a time for socialisation, helping residents to bond over shared tastes and experiences. Nostalgic food experiences can boost mood, provide a sense of belonging, and reduce feelings of isolation or disconnection.

In individuals with dementia, memory is often affected, and it can be difficult to remember recent events or recognise loved ones. However, the sensory experience of eating a familiar food – recognising the smell, texture, or taste – can transport you back to memories that are otherwise hard to reach. Food nostalgia can bring joy or clarity and allow individuals with dementia to feel a sense of comfort, identity, and social connectedness.

A guide to 'taste travelling'

These ideas aim to create meaningful and comforting experiences by engaging the senses and sparking positive memories tied to food.

IDENTIFY FAMILIAR FOODS

Ask about their favourite food, childhood meals, or foods that remind them of special occasions. You could also ask family members or caregivers to identify dishes that were important to them in the past.

ENCOURAGE SOCIAL DINING

Share meals with family, friends, or fellow residents. Social connections during nostalgic food moments help to increase engagement and create a sense of belonging.

SHARE STORIES AT THE DINNER TABLE

Pair mealtime with storytelling. Encourage conversations about the memories associated with certain foods while eating together, such as family traditions, holidays, or past events.

DON'T FORGET AROMAS

It's not all about taste, our sense of smell can be a powerful memory trigger! The scent of bread baking, a favourite dish of different herbs/spices can engage our sense of smell and create food nostalgia.

USE MEMORY PROMPTS

Place old family photos or memorabilia nearby or on the dining table. These can serve as conversation starters.

CREATE A COMFORTABLE MEALTIME ATMOSPHERE

Serve meals in a familiar environment, perhaps with traditional table settings, music, photos, their favourite bowl/cutlery, or decor that reflects holidays or family gatherings.

OFFER CULTURAL DISHES

Include meals that reflect the person's cultural heritage, including regional specialties. These can help a person connect to their roots and upbringing, particularly if that cuisine is different to what is offered regularly.

RECREATE TRADITIONAL RECIPES

Many families have dishes passed down through generations or brought out for special occasions. Where possible, prepare these dishes using the original recipe and try to recreate the presentation. This can help to evoke memories of family gatherings.

ENGAGE IN COOKING TOGETHER

If possible, involve the person in cooking or preparing the food. Cooking, especially with familiar ingredients, can spark memories and give a sense of accomplishment.



















SEASONAL FRUIT & VEGETABLES

What's in season

Seasonal produce not only tastes good, but it also comes with other benefits to your health, budget, and environment. Changing food with each season will ensure that residents are eating the best of what each season brings. So what's in season right now? Let's take a look.

In Season* October, November December

FRUIT bananas, strawberries, cherries, grapefruit, loquat, lychee, mango, honeydew, rockmelon, watermelon, orange, papaya, pawpaw, pineapples, starfruit.

VEGETABLES artichoke, asian greens, asparagus, avocado, bean, broccoli, capsicum, celery, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, onions, peas, silverbeet, spinach, spring onions, sweetcorn, tomato, watercress.

For fresh seasonal fruit & vegetables DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR, ask us how we can help.

include these fruits & veggies within your spring menu

*This will vary around Australia



Making Menu & Mealtime Quality Assessments simple

BOOK YOUR MMQA

The Menu & Mealtime Quality Assessments (MMQA) was developed using the Aged Care Quality Standard as the framework, and therefore, is fundamental in demonstrating to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission that your home is meeting applicable standards.

Although the MMQA is a comprehensive and thorough review, our MMQA process has been tried and tested to streamline the process – Our Dietitians have it down pat!

We use our modern digital system to complete your review to ensure this process is as time and cost efficient as possible. With our resources and guidelines to help guide your chef, we make this complicated process easy. You won't be in a pickle with Standard 6, when choosing OSCAR Care Group Dietitians to complete your annual MMQA.

Download the MMQA factsheet HERE

www.oscarcaregroup.com.au/resources

MENU REVIEWS MMQA 10



NUTRITION

Chickpeas

The tiny nutritional powerhouse

Chickpeas promote heart health, lowering cholesterol, aiding in digestion, regulating blood glucose levels, promoting bone strength and gut health, and has anti-inflammatory properties. Chickpeas are a form of soluble fibre that helps to slow movement through the large bowel and help with diarrhoea. It's certainly a mighty legume! Let's take a moment to celebrate this affordable nutritional powerhouse.













Here are 8 things to know about chickpeas



NUTRITIONAL BOOST

Combining chickpeas with other food groups such as vegetables, wholegrains and protein and this will help to boost the nutritional value of your childcare meals.



CULTURAL DISHES

It blends and fits well in different cultural cuisines and there are plenty of tasty recipes to try.



TWO OUT OF FIVE FOOD GROUPS

Chickpeas count towards a vegetable and a meat serve. The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE), chickpeas fall under two categories.



EASY TO COOK & PREPARE

Dried chickpeas can be prepared by soaking chickpeas in water overnight, boiling and simmering to cool down. Canned chickpeas do not need to be cooked, they are ready to eat.



PLANT-BASED DIETS

They are a good plant-based alternative to boost protein intake for vegetarian and plant-based diets.



ECONOMICAL

Chickpeas are also a great top up for minced meat dishes such as stews, stir fry, spaghetti Bolognese and burger patties by making the meals more economical.



ALLERGIES

A chickpea allergy is not one of the common food allergies in Australia. However, if someone has a peanut or soybean allergy, it is common to also be allergic to chickpeas.



SAFE CONSUMPTION

Be wary of too many chickpeas. Chickpeas are highly nutritious, however as they are a type of oligosaccharide carbohydrate, consuming a certain amount may cause bloating, gas, diarrhea and discomfort for some, depending on the person's tolerance.

NUTRITION CHICKPEAS 11



FOOD SAFETY

When to wash your hands



BEFORE COMMENCING WORK



AFTER GOING TO THE TOILET



BEFORE HANDLING FOOD



AFTER HANDLING RAW FOOD



BEFORE HANDLING READY-TO-EAT FOODS



BEFORE & AFTER HANDLING ALLERGENS



AFTER HANDLING CHEMICALS, CLEANING CLOTHS OR EQUIPMENT



AFTER DISPOSING OF/OR HANDLING WASTE



AFTER GARDENING



AFTER EATING OR DRINKING



AFTER SMOKING OR VAPING



AFTER EVERY BREAK



AFTER BITING NAILS, LICKING FINGERS, OR TOUCHING PIMPLES OR SORES



AFTER RUNNING FINGERS THROUGH THE HAIR, OR SCRATCHING THE SCALP

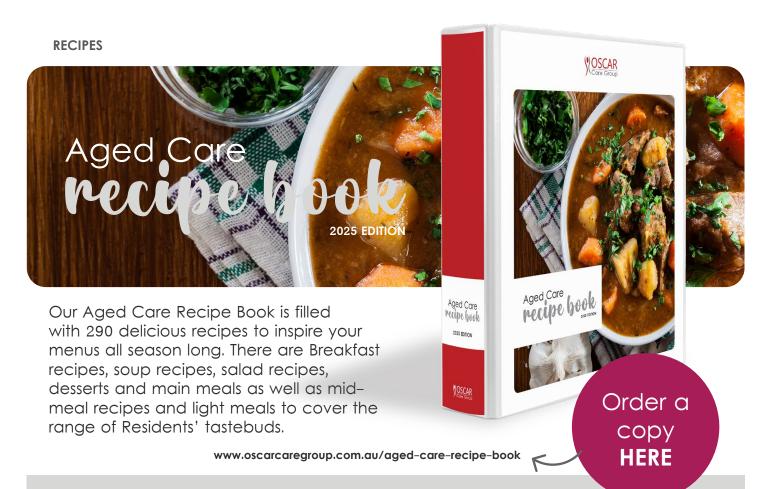


AFTER USING A TISSUE



AFTER HANDLING ANIMALS OR INSECTS







RECIPES AGED CARE RECIPE BOOK 13

Do you get the cauliwobbles around audit time?

Fear not, our auditors guide and support you to ensure national regulations and outcomes are met. Our in-depth knowledge of legislation and hospitality experience will contribute to your overall success.



FOOD SAFETY AUDITING 14



FOOD SAFETY

Avoid food poisoning tis Christmas

Will you be able to sing the 12 days of Christmas without getting food poisoning this festive season? Follow these simple tips and hints and your celebrations will be a fun filled occasion.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me...



TWELVE PLATES OF LEFTOVERS

Immediately refrigerate and cool leftover food in long shallow pans, follow the Cooling Rule 21° in 2 hours, food can be put in the fridge and cooled to 5° or colder within the next 4 hours. It is estimated that around 30% of food poisoning case are caused by incorrect cooling procedures.

ELEVEN DOUBLE DIPPERS

Use a clean spoon each time you taste test. If you're the one serving dips offer smaller chips that reduce the likelihood of double-dipping and the resulting spread of pathogens.

TEN DIRTY FINGERS

Wash your hands before preparing any food for cooking, baking, or serving. Wash hands with soap and running warm water for 20 seconds or to the tune of "Jingle Bells" to ensure you remove all germs.

NINE POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS

Bacteria loves to grow in food made with dairy products, shell eggs, meats, poultry, fish, shellfish, cooked beans and lentils, rice or pasta. Keep these foods out of the temperature danger zone.

EIGHT UNWASHED VEGGIES

Wash all fresh vegetables and fruits under running tap water. You should also wash those with rinds and skin that are going to be consumed.

SEVEN SICK ASSISTANTS

If you are sick, you shouldn't be in the kitchen preparing food. Viruses cause more and more foodborne illnesses.



SIX CONTAMINATED CHOPPING BOARDS

Cross contamination is the transfer of micro-organisms from raw or contaminated food, equipment or people to cooked or prepared food. Coloured chopping boards assists to prevent cross contamination.

FIVE WARM CHARCUTERIE BOARDS

Listeria monocytogenes bacteria can multiply at refrigeration temperatures. It's been found in soft cheeses like Brie, feta, Camembert, blue-veined cheese and in ready-to-eat cold cuts. Carefully observe "sell by" and "use by" dates on ready-to-eat foods.

FOUR UNSAFE TEMPERATURES

Foods should not be at room temperature for more than 2 hours. This includes preparation time.

THREE HARASSED COOKS

Mistakes happen when people are busy and distracted trying to meet the needs of their guests. Develop a master plan of tasks that need to be done along with directions and assign tasks to ensure everyone knows what has to be completed and by when.

TWO DIRTY DISH TOWELS

One of the most important aspects of cooking and baking is doing so on properly sanitised surfaces. It's best to air–dry dishes. Wet dish towels can harbor bacteria and spread it to clean dishes. Many times, dish towels end up on your shoulder or 'dirty' countertops.

AND AN UNDERCOOKED STUFFED TURKEY

Got meat? Get a thermometer!

No matter how you slice it, using a food or meat thermometer is the only way to tell if food has reached a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria. Using a thermometer will keep you from overcooking food too.

ABOUT US

Supporting you to deliver five star care and hospitality

We make it our business to know all the legislative requirements for Aged Care homes, Class 1 food premises to ensure you keep our residents safe. Our Dietitians, Speech Pathologists, Physios, Food Safety Experts and Auditors are here to help you meet your compliance needs and improve the quality of residents' lives. Afterall, our residents' deserve the best of care!

ALLIED HEALTH

Our Allied Health team is here to provide one-on-one care for your residents.

FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMS

Stay compliant with our food safety program.

MENU REVIEWS

Desktop Menu Reviews, MMQA or we can develop a menu from scratch with you.

RECIPES

Add flavour to their plate with our range of recipes tailored for elderly nutrition for Aged Care.

AUDITING

Gap Audits, Internal Audits, and 3rd Party Independent Food Safety Audits.

OSCAR PLUS

Everything at your finger tips.

FOOD SAFETY TRAINING

Our suite of accredited courses are tailored to the Aged Care industry.

IDDSI TRAINING

Evidenced-based IDDSI training to break down the complexity into smooth practical bite-sized chunks.

FOOD ALLERGY TRAINING

Everything you need to know when preparing food for residents with an allergy.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Webinars, events & free resources for all aged care staff.

















