

Food & Beverages

Research and Recommendations
for Long-Term Care



You Are What You Eat!

The nutrients in the food and beverages that we consume play a big role in our health and well-being. For residents in long-term care, getting the right amount of protein, fluid, vitamins and minerals starts with eating and drinking enough at mealtimes.

Research Study:

Making the Most of Mealtimes (M3)

M3 is a national study that looked at what residents in long-term care eat and drink, and what factors promote better nutrition. This page shares some of the findings from over 600 residents who participated in the study.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

90%



of residents in long-term care were not drinking enough **FLUID**.

96%



of residents in long-term care were not getting enough **PROTEIN**.

50%



of residents in long-term care were not getting enough of several **VITAMINS & MINERALS**.

On average, residents were getting well below the daily recommended minimum of 1,500 mL of fluid, and less protein than the daily recommendation of 1.2 g/kg body weight.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The 9 vitamins and minerals most likely to fall below recommendations were:

Calcium
Folate
Magnesium
Potassium
Zinc

Vitamin B6
Vitamin D
Vitamin E
Vitamin K

Nutrient Supplements

Almost **75%** of residents were taking a nutrient supplement. However, many of the residents taking supplements were still not getting enough of those nutrients. The only exception was vitamin D. Most residents who took vitamin D supplements were able to get enough of it.



WHAT CAN WE DO?



Pay attention to residents' needs. If they need support, offer assistance to help them consume more food and beverages at mealtimes.



Talk to residents about the meal, even if they cannot communicate with words. For example, talk about how good the food smells.



Provide cues and guidance to help residents get started or continue eating. For example, place utensils in their hand.



Enhance the nutrient density of the meals served. For example, use red peppers instead of green peppers in a recipe to add more vitamins.



Take advantage of snacks between meals to provide nutritious foods and a beverage.



Have a beverage station in a common area that is accessible to residents.

Learn More!

Explore helpful tools and resources for improving mealtimes at: www.the-ria.ca

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The M3 research team was led by Heather Keller, Schlegel Research Chair in Nutrition & Aging, University of Waterloo.

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