



## Menus Matter!

A good menu provides the nutrients we need in the foods we enjoy. A well-balanced menu takes careful planning. For residents in long-term care, getting the right amount of nutrients starts with a high-quality menu.

### 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?

### Nutrition Standards



In general, the amount of calories, protein, and variety of food on the menus met standards.



About half of the vitamins and minerals found in foods on the menus were lower than the levels required for optimal health.

### Texture Modified Menus



Pureed menus were typically less nutritious than regular texture menus.



Greater spending on food was associated with higher quality menus, especially for pureed menus.

# WHAT DID WE LEARN?

## Menu Planning



Menus that were revised more often and had a shorter menu cycle were typically higher quality and more nutritious.



The quality of menus varied among long-term care homes—even those within the same province. This suggests that menu planning is influenced by factors at the home level, such as emphasis on food quality, and not only by provincial factors like regulations.

## Provincial Differences



Menus in Ontario and Manitoba had higher amounts of several nutrients when compared to Alberta and New Brunswick.



The amount of financial investment in food differed among the 4 provinces. Long-term care homes in Ontario have protected funding and provided the most money for food.

# WHAT CAN WE DO?



Revise menus in long-term care at least once every 6 months.



Plan a 3 or 4 week menu cycle.



Include a variety of food on menus to meet residents' preferences.



Ensure sufficient funding is allocated to purchasing and preparing high quality food.



Engage a dietitian to help with menu planning and nutrient analysis.

Ensure that the amount of nutrients is the same for both regular and pureed menus.

Ensure that menus meet the Dietary Reference Intakes to support the health of residents.

## Learn More!

Explore helpful tools and resources for improving mealtimes at: [www.the-ria.ca](http://www.the-ria.ca)

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