

## Section 6

# Right Diet to Right Resident

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## 6.1 Overview

Written processes and clear communication are needed within food production, delivery, and service. Providing residents with the right food at meals and snacks is important to keep them safe and to help meet their nutrition needs. Food service and other staff should be familiar with the dietary needs of individual residents. A system should be in place to ensure the correct food and fluids are provided at each meal. Policies and procedures related to food service should be developed and staff should be educated on the processes.

## 6.2 Tips for Diet Process Flow

Have a process in place for clearly communicating and identifying residents with special diets, food allergies, intolerances or restrictions, and/or likes and dislikes.

### **Communicate all new requests or changes to a diet to nursing, food service, and dining room staff:**

- A “Diet Request Form” completed by an assigned staff member can help outline special dietary requirements for all diet types. A [Sample Diet Request Form](#) is available in Appendix 6A.
- Any diet changes should be communicated using the Diet Request form. The assigned staff member (see Section 6.4 for staff assignments) should update the form and make sure all areas, such as the kitchen, dining area, and resident’s chart reflect the change.
- A similar process can also be used to update the [“Food Allergies, Intolerances and Restrictions Record”](#) (see Appendix 1A).
- New requests or changes should follow the site’s privacy policy.

**Identify each resident following a special diet.**

- This can be done using a dining room table card with the resident's name and special diet (see Appendix 6B, [Colour Coded Special Diet Cards](#)), diet binder/kardex, spreadsheet or whiteboard. These can list a resident's dietary needs such as special diet, food allergies/intolerances, restrictions (for example, religious or cultural), and food likes/dislikes.
- Use this system to cross-check all diets to ensure residents are receiving the correct meals and snacks daily. Keep this cross-check system regularly updated and easily available for staff to reference.
  - Any process developed should meet the privacy policy requirements of the site.

**Ensure meals and snacks are prepared and labeled to meet any special dietary requirements.** See Section 4, [Substitutions and Special Diets](#) for more information.

**Have a system to transport bulk meals to the dining room following food safety guidelines.** Check the temperature of the food to make sure it is appropriate (keep hot foods hot, and cold foods cold). See Section 1.4 [Food Safety](#) for more information.

**Plate meals for individual residents as appropriate and ensure the right meal goes to the right resident.**

- Use the correct size serving utensils to ensure standard portions when plating foods. Refer to the [Standardized Portion Sizes](#), see Section 2.7 of the toolkit for further information.

**Have processes in place for meal service and distribution.**

- Ensure residents are in the dining area at the start of meal service so there are no delays.
- Make sure meals are served at the posted time.
- Everyone at the same table should be served at the same time.
- Have extra food and beverage servings available.
- Rotate the order of table-by-table service on a regular basis to allow each resident the chance to be served first.
- Assign staff regular tables so they become familiar with the dietary needs and preferences of individuals.
- Inform the residents of what they are being served.

**Provide meal and snack assistance.**

- Review seating patterns often to ensure individuals are eating with suitable tablemates.
- As appropriate, seat those requiring assistance (visually impaired, physical limitations, and may need help opening packages or having foods cut up) at tables together.

**Tray service:** Tray service is where the complete meal is assembled on a tray ahead of time and brought to the resident. If using tray service, meals need to be plated and labeled with the individual's name and special diet before bringing the meal to the individual in the dining room or their room.

## 6.3 Assigning Tasks for Diet Process Flow for Meal Services

A variety of staff members may be involved in ensuring the process of providing the right diet to the right resident flows smoothly. The [Sample Diet Process Flow Chart](#) on the next page, outlines food service tasks to be completed and the suggested staff member(s) responsible. The chart provides space to list individuals assigned to each task. The staff completing these tasks can vary from site to site, but all these tasks should be clearly defined and assigned. Place the diet process flow chart where all staff can access it, such as the site's policies and procedures manual.

## 6.4 Sample Diet Process Flow for Meal Services

This process flow may help staff understand the roles for each staff member involved with meal services at your site. The tasks and staff member suggestions below can be changed to suit your needs.



### Task



### Staff Member

Develop policies and procedures related to food service and provide education to staff on the processes.

Food Service Manager or Supervisor

Communicate all new requests or changes to diet using a 'diet request form'. Update form with any changes, ensuring the kitchen, dining area and resident's chart reflect changes.

Chef, Food Service Staff, Case Manager, Nursing Staff, Dietitian

Identify residents following special diets using a dining room table card, diet binder or kardex, spreadsheet, etc. Use the system to cross-check meals and snacks when served.

Chef, Food Service Staff, Nursing Staff

Prepare meals and appropriate special diet items. Label special and/or texture modified meal items for residents.

Chef, Food Service Staff, Nursing Staff

Transport meals in bulk to the dining area. Check food temperatures to ensure foods are in the safe temperature zone.

Food Service Staff

Use the correct serving utensils to plate appropriate meals with standard portions for individual residents. Ensure the right meal goes to the right resident.

Food Service Staff

Distribute meals to residents using the cross-check system to ensure the right food goes to the right resident.

Food Service Staff

Provide meal and snack assistance to residents. For example, help to open packages or cut up foods.

Food Service Staff, Volunteer

Report changes in resident's eating pattern to help identify poor intake, a need to change diet, or a need to change level of care.

All