HIGH CALORIE FINGER FOODS

For those people with Dementia who struggle to use cutlery or wander at mealtimes, finger foods can prolong independence & dignity.

The use of finger foods can improve a poor appetite & increase food intake between meals.

Finger foods are also ideal for people who require longer to eat. They can eat at their own pace & because they are served at room temperature, they don’t go cold.

If finger foods are initially rejected, offer them again at other mealtimes, over several days.

Tips for preparing finger foods

- Choose variety of finger foods for meals, puddings & snacks to prevent repetition & ensure meals are nutritionally balanced.
- Use foods that are robust & easy to hold.
- Choose foods that are moist & not too messy.
- Serve finger foods in small pieces.
- Finger foods can easily be prepared in advance & serve at room temperature.
- Be creative
  - Make sure finger foods look attractive on the plate.
  - Make mini versions of food rather than cutting up larger versions.
- Offer finger foods of correct texture. If a person manages more easily with soft foods, do not offer raw vegetables !!
- Establish food likes & dislikes.

Breakfast food ideas

- Buttered toast or bread fingers with jam, marmalade, hummus, peanut butter, honey, chocolate spread or lemon curd
- Buttered crumpets or muffins with jam
- Buttered scotch pancakes with jam
- Brioche, Croissants, Pastries
- Buttered hot cross buns
- Waffles with syrup
- Buttered teacakes, Fruit loaf, Malt loaf
- Buttered scone with jam
- Eggy bread squares
- Mini sausages
- Dried fruit – dates, apricots
- Soft cereal bars
- Cheese on toast slices
- Boiled egg, cut into quarters

Main meal ideas

- Meat, sliced & cut into pieces e.g: beef, pork or lamb (meat that is dry may be difficult to eat, so try to keep it moist).
- Chicken or turkey breast (moist) cut into pieces.
- Small beef burgers, meatballs, sausages, chipolatas or hotdogs.
- Slices of meatloaf
• Gammon pieces with pineapple chunks
• Pieces of fish fillet (boned), fish fingers, small fishcakes.
• Chicken nuggets or scampi pieces
• Hard boiled eggs, quartered
• Scotch eggs
• Bhajis & mini samosas
• Slices of quiche or pizza
• Finger slices of toast or bread with pate
• Sandwiches – egg or tuna mayonnaise, soft or sliced cheese, sliced ham or other meat, peanut butter, meat or fish paste.
• Buttered bread rolls
• Slices of cheese on toast
• Kebabs
• Potato wedges, chunky chips or sweet potato wedges.
• Small roast potatoes, Boiled potatoes halved or Mini new potatoes.
• Potato waffles
• Buttered crackers with soft cheese, pate or meat paste.
• Cheese cubed or sliced

Fruit and Vegetables

Not high in calories or protein but an important part of the diet to give variety & vitamins and minerals.

- Vegetables can be steamed, roasted, boiled or served raw.
- Fruit can be peeled if preferred. The peel may make it easier for the person to grip the pieces especially if slippery fruit as peach or nectarine.

Dessert ideas

• Slice of fruit cake or gingerbread
• Small cakes or buns, slices of cake
• Fancy biscuits – chocolate, caramel & cream/jam varieties
• Ice cream in a cone, Ice lolly
• Mini fruit pies, Tarts, Egg custard
• Chocolate
• Pieces of flapjack, Cookies
• Mini sweet muffins or Doughnut
• Cereal & fruit/nut bars
• Pancake rolled with filling – chocolate spread, syrup, peanut butter
• Sponge or bread & butter pudding chunks with creamy custard dip
• Fruit wedges with a thick & creamy yogurt dip

References:

Alzheimer’s Society (2009) Alzheimer’s Society guide to catering for people with dementia

Caroline Walker Trust (2011) Eating Well: Supporting older people & older people with dementia