



FINGER FOODS

Facilitating independence through finger foods can increase quality of life for people dealing with dementia or other disorders that limit the ability to use traditional cutlery at meals. Finger foods can be prepared per taste preference and can be a flexible, dignified way to increase oral nutrition intake and prolong independence.

TIPS

Nutrition tips to help achieve a balanced meal plan in order to maintain body weight, hydration and well-being.

- Provide nutrient-dense foods.
- Serve cereals or soups in a mug.
- Put condiments in a soufflé cup on the side for dipping.
- Provide a straw with cup to prevent spills.
- Cut foods like sandwiches into quarters.
- Use a smaller amount of sandwich filling to make it easier to bite into.

FOOD SAFETY

Preparing foods that can be picked up easily with the hands allow mealtime to be enjoyed more easily, but be sure to create a safe environment by using the tips below.

- Promote proper hand sanitation before and after meals.
- Ensure proper precautions are taken to prevent choking.
- Avoid toothpicks and other sharp objects.

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FOODS RECOMMENDED

Most foods can be included into a finger food meal plan if prepared and served correctly.

Food list adapted from Finger Food Nutrition Therapy from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

GRAINS

- Any breads or rolls that can be picked up to eat by hand (bread, rolls, bread sticks, biscuits, muffins, toast, bagels, English muffins, tortilla, pita bread, sandwich wraps)
- Any potato that can be picked up and eaten by hand (wedges, French fries, potato tots/puffs, hashbrowns, home fries, baked potato (pieces), baked sweet potato (pieces), knishes)
- Rice dishes that can be picked up and eaten by hand (rice balls, rice cakes, risotto in a mug (more moist and sticks together))
- Pasta dishes that can be picked up, dipped, and eaten by hand (ziti, ravioli, tortellini, spirals)
- Cold cereals that are formed in large pieces, served without milk

VEGETABLES

- Raw vegetable pieces
- Any vegetables cooked to crisp-tender texture (drained)
- Tater tots, boiled or baked potatoes cut into pieces
- Corn on the cob, large slices of vegetables, corn nuggets

PROTEIN

- Poultry, Meat, and Fish that are cut into bite-sized pieces before eating (fish sticks, turkey burger, chicken and fish nuggets/patties/tenders, fish cakes, croquettes, salmon burger, chicken patties, fried fish/shrimp, strips or chunks of poultry, meat, fish, salisbury steak, tender lunchmeat (cold cuts), corned beef, hot dogs, meatballs, pigs in a blanket)
- Peanut butter sandwich or peanut butter crackers
- Scrambled, poached, hard-boiled, fried eggs, omelets cut into small pieces

DAIRY

- Slices or chunks of cheese
- Milk

FRUITS

- Any canned fruits cut into bite-sized pieces or slices
- Any fresh fruit cut into pieces or served whole if able to bite off pieces

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