

OKLAHOMA DIETETIC ASSOCIATION – APRIL 18, 2008

Trends & Traditions: Defining & Mystifying “Changes” in Long Term Care

A. Liberalization of Diets in long term care

Recommendations in support of liberalizing diets in long term care

American Dietetic Association Position Paper JADA - June 2005

(www.eatright.org)

American Diabetes Association Position Paper Original 2006, Revised 2007

(www.diacare/diabetesjournals.org)

Question #1

What are the some of the benefits of liberalizing diets in long term care?

1. Improved intake of meals and snacks
2. Increased accuracy of preparation of meal trays / easier for staff and residents if buffet or family style dining is available.
3. Improved quality of life
4. Improved psycho-social status of residents
5. Improvement in maintaining acceptable nutrition parameters (i.e. weight, lab values, skin integrity)
6. Simplify cooking for staff

Question #2

How can you implement a system of liberalizing diets in long term care?

1. Meet with interdisciplinary team to explain process
2. Meet with medical director – having their support is very beneficial
3. Review menu and menu extensions to determine what diets the facility will be offering
4. Notify physicians of residents with letter (see example)
5. Educate facility staff on what diets will be offered and making adjustments if receive diet orders not in line with facility policy. This will need to be an ongoing process as new staff is hired.
6. Notify families of any changes made
7. Monitor outcomes of residents: i.e. weight, lab values, blood pressure, and meal intake, emotional response)
7. Document interventions in medical record
8. Document communication with physician in medical record
9. Document communication with family in medical record
10. Document staff and resident and/or family education regarding diet changes and acceptance of any diet restrictions

Question #3

How can liberalizing diets/changing type of meal service improves the quality of life of residents? How can resident be involved?

1. Enjoy dining experience—gives decision-making back to residents (i.e. when I eat, where I eat, how much I eat, with whom I eat, etc.)
2. Provide less institutional and more home-like environment (i.e. furniture, décor, music, offer food throughout day/24 hours per day, family style dining, buffet style dining, etc.)
3. Residents involvement: decorating dining areas, grow vegetable, share family recipes and help and have resident help cook them if facility is able to accommodate this, encourage families to eat with residents, plan special events held in facility

SAMPLE PHYSICIAN LETTER RE: LIBERALIZING DIETS-

Source: *Dietary Manager Magazine* March/April 1995
Article written by Becky Dorner, RD/LD

Dear Dr. _____

Thank you for your continued quality medical care for the residents at _____ . Our residents' Quality of Life is of utmost importance to us and to our resident's families. Your expertise plays a very important role in providing the quality of life we all want for our residents.

One of the most important highlights in our resident's lives is the meals that they receive. Residents look forward to mealtime each day and good food intake and nutrition is extremely important for good health and well being. Food has many personal meanings to each resident and mealtimes are important social occasions.

Most residents have not followed restrictive diets prior to admission. Residents on restrictive diets tend to be unhappy, and frequently do not comply with their diets.

In addition, state and federal surveyors tend to scrutinize therapeutic diets very closely. In a long-term care setting, staffing frequently does not permit the time needed to prepare complicated special diets. Long-term care facilities frequently have limited kitchen space for storage and preparation of the special items needed.

For these reasons we would like to simplify and liberalize the diets offered in our facility. We believe that the advantages far outweigh any possible negative outcomes. Please review the attached information and consider our suggestions.

The employees at _____ look forward to working with you to provide a team approach to Resident Care for the purpose of promoting quality of life for our residents.\

Sincerely,

Administrator
Dietary Manager

Director of Nursing
Dietitian