

PREFACE

I wrote this book as the result of my lifetime work with long-term care communities and my association with the cooks that dedicate their life to improve the quality of life and care of so many elderly, disabled and sick persons residing in them. I have a lifetime teaching credential for the California Community Colleges and for many years have taught basic culinary, foodservice and nutrition classes. In addition I have directed and conducted certification classes for dietary managers and developed training for foodservice staff in long-term-care companies and private facilities.

A cook's work in nursing homes is a lot more complex than most think. They must have excellent timing and a good memory to remember all the parts that go together in order to produce delicious meals that are attractive, nutritious and meet the dietary restrictions of many of the residents. They also must pay attention to the multitude of special requests necessary to please the residents at every meal, have everything ready on time, start and end on time and serve accurately regardless of heat, noise or interruptions for last minute requests. And all of this while remaining calm and controlled, ensuring the support staff is also functioning as they need to, and remaining positive. It's no wonder that attending the initial orientation for new employees and monthly inservices is not enough!

This orientation and training manual is an excellent refresher course for seasoned cooks. It is a much needed self-paced study manual for new cooks in the industry and those that hope to enter the industry soon. It is not however intended to train cooks in basic cooking skills as it is not a cooking book although some common terminology all cooks should know is included. Since regulatory requirements change often, this book includes only general regulatory information and resources for accessing it. However it does point out the importance of following regulations and food codes.

The Learning Experiences help test the knowledge gained in each section, and the "did you know...?" point out facts that many forget or never knew about. The competencies section found at the end of the chapters section is extensive and serves as a self-evaluation as well as quick review later on. If time allows it's a good idea to also use the competencies as a pre-test then compare the pre and post test results. That's the true measure of learning.

For more detailed information and procedures I recommend you also purchase the Dining Services Policies & Procedures Manual for Long Term Care Communities.

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INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the Dining Services Team

For many nursing home residents mealtime is the highlight of their day. A tasty, attractive meal they like, served at the proper temperature and at a consistent time each day that they like will be well accepted and contribute to their overall sense of satisfaction and well-being. On the other hand, a meal which is cold, late, unattractive, and unappetizing will make them feel angry, frustrated and helpless. They feel they lost control and they will not eat.

As a cook in the dietary department you're fortunate to be able to bring a great deal of pleasure to your resident's lives. With that, however, comes the responsibility to ensure that the meal service meets certain standards of temperature, timeliness, palatability and accuracy. Your pride in your work makes it possible for the dietary team to serve the residents wholesome and appetizing meals

prepared in a clean kitchen. The department manager is your immediate supervisor and is responsible for the overall functioning of the department. One of her jobs is to assist and guide you along your orientation path and ensure that company policies and regulatory requirements are followed.

As you go through this book you will learn the steps you need to succeed. This will help ensure the residents receive delicious, nutritious and wholesome food according to the diet order, food preferences and other needs.

Your work is important – do it proudly!



REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

There are regulatory requirements for food safety and to preserve the nutrients in the foods prepared and served. Knowing these requirements will help you perform a better job.

Regulations and Meal Quality

- A. Federal Regulations describe quality meal service in the following manner:
- 1. The community must provide each resident with a nourishing, palatable, well-balanced diet that meets the daily nutritional and special dietary needs of each resident.)*
 - 2. Food is prepared by methods that conserve nutritive value, flavor, and appearance.*
 - 3. Food is palatable, attractive, and at the proper temperature.*
- B. State and County Regulations:
1. Every state and county has their own regulations regarding food handling, food safety and credentials required for foodservice workers. It is your responsibility to have that information and be prepared to provide proof of any credentials needed when you start your job.
 2. It is possible to search on-line courses by state or county, or go to any of the national food handlers and food safety websites for information. Some of the courses available can be found in the following websites:

Sample Description of House Diets

DIET	<i>The Order Will Read</i>	Description
REGULAR	<i>Regular Diet + "Texture Modification"</i>	Provides approximately 2200 calories, 80-90 grams protein. 3 cups regular (4%) or low-fat (2%) milk included daily as chosen by the resident.
NO ADDED SALT (NAS)	<i>No Added Salt Diet + "Texture modification"</i>	Prepared from the Regular diet menu. No salt packet on tray. Other consistencies will be specified in the diet order. Salt substitutes are not routinely served.
CONSISTENT CARBOHYDRATE DIET (CCHO OR CCD)	<i>Consistent Carbohydrate Diet + "Texture modification"</i>	Prepared from the Regular diet menu, modified to provide a consistent carbohydrate distribution throughout the day. Each meal provides an equal amount of carbohydrate grams. Sugar substitute will be provided. Decrease sugars and other forms of concentrated sweets may be offered at resident request or MD order.
MECHANICAL SOFT	<i>Mechanical Soft Diet + "Therapeutic modification" if any</i>	Prepared from the Regular diet or appropriate Therapeutic diet menu. Meat will be chopped, cut small or ground according to individual tolerance. Gravy added as needed to ease swallowing. Other foods fork tender and soft.
PUREED	<i>Pureed Diet + "Therapeutic modification" if any (it is appropriate for dysphagia) Pureed No Concentrated Sweets or Pureed No Added Salt</i>	Prepared from the Regular or Therapeutic diet menu. Bakery goods served according to individual tolerance, whole, soaked or slurried. NOTE: Pureed diets requiring therapeutic modification will be liberalized.

Therapeutic Modifications

At times a therapeutic modification restricts the type or amount of a food item, or how it's prepared, so it cannot receive exactly what is prepared for the regular menu. In keeping with the liberalized diet philosophy, a food as closely resembling the original item on the menu will be either the same item prepared differently or a food closely resembling it. The therapeutic menu will indicate this change. It's important to always follow the menu and the menu portions.

Example

- The regular menu has Candied Sweet Potatoes. Alternative 1: The diabetic or CCHO menu serves Sweet Potatoes prepared without sugar or uses sugar substitute and the portion remains the same. Alternative 2: serve the regular menu item, candied sweet potatoes, in a smaller portion. This is done in order to control the amount of carbohydrate or sugar served to the resident. The registered dietitian writing and approving the menu decides this & honors resident preferences

Learning experience Pick the correct answer(s): The regular menu serves Lemon Meringue Pie for dessert. Choose the correct dessert for a diabetic diet without calorie restrictions:

- a smaller slice of the same pie***
- a pie made with artificial sweetener***
- a sugar-free lemon pudding***

Texture Modifications

Texture modified foods are also called Mechanically Altered. This terminology is used to describe food that is changed by mechanical means, such as knife chopping, fork mashing, or in a food processor or blender to make it easier to chew and/or swallow. The names given describe the process and what the food looks like fairly closely. Mechanically altered food is prepared fresh according to the day's menu. There are several kinds of textures served in most communities to accommodate all levels of functioning and diagnosis. The diet order includes type of texture modification needed as well as if there is any therapeutic modification. Be sure to learn the diet order terminology and follow menus, recipes and preparation instructions. These are some of the names you will find; learn each one and be sure you know how to prepare them correctly.

- Chopped
- Mechanical Soft
- Ground
- Pureed
- Dysphagia

Follow preparation instructions in the recipe and use the appropriate equipment such as a sharp knife, potato masher, pastry cutter, food processor or blender. Avoid the addition of extra liquids or thickeners and use standardized recipes including condiments and seasonings. This ensures the nutrition, appearance and taste of mechanically

Finger Food Preparation Guidelines

- Regular finger foods should be soft to avoid choking. Sandwich fillings may be sliced thin, ground or chopped fine and mixed with gravy or dressings such as mayonnaise, ketchup or yogurt to ease swallowing.
- No hot dogs unless ground; all meat cubes cut to less than ½ inch size; no skin, no bones.
- Roll-ups may be prepared with soft tortillas, pita bread.
- Soften peanut butter to ease swallowing by mixing with pureed fruits such as applesauce, honey, mayonnaise, Butter and milk or cream – see recipes.
- Pureed finger foods should be served as a sandwich, in mug or cup, or in waffle type ice cream cones as tolerated. Remove crust from bread and use only soft, moist breads. Do not slurry bread for finger foods as it will fall apart.
- To thicken pureed fruits and salads, drain well and use thickener, bread crumbs, cottage cheese, yogurt or mayonnaise. *Do not use gelatin to thicken salads and fruits for dysphagia residents.*
- Do not give ice cream and gelatin to *dysphagia* diets thicken to prevent choking and aspiration. Most pureed foods may be served as slushy puré in mugs and cups. If serving slushy puréed foods, follow slushy recipes.

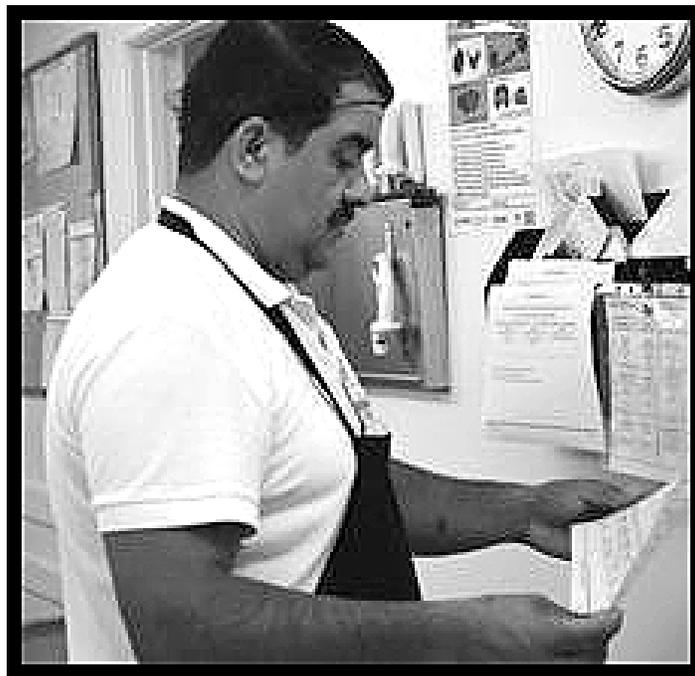
Take the time to review the menu and recipes daily at the start of your shift. This is your map to preparing each day's meal.

Learning experience

Review your facility's daily menu and find the recipes for one meal. Your manager will provide a sample of your own menu and recipes during orientation and training.

USING THE MENUS

This is how you use the menu



Review it before you start cooking & keep it handy for reference

The menu includes the three meals and portions of each food item served for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Always review the menu

RESIDENT SATISFACTION WITH MEALS

As a cook you work very hard to prepare the best food possible. All that effort however is in vain unless you know how well your food is accepted. This evaluation is a necessary part of collecting data so that the Executive Director or Administrator and your department manager are able to conduct a Quality Assurance and Process Improvement review. Your part in this is ensuring that the meals are in compliance with regulatory requirements is important. Cooks are responsible for making sure that the food is prepared in a sanitary way according to the planned menu and recipes. Additionally food needs to be attractive, tasty and nutritious, and that served at the right temperatures.

How do you know that the residents like the food? There are several ways; checking plate waste, doing a brief dining room walk-through, asking residents and their families directly, listening to comments from nursing and noting how many meal replacements of food substitutes are requested during and after a meal. However, it's important for administration to have hard data that can be quantified (added and summarized), and tracked.

Conducting routine *satisfaction surveys* and interacting with residents and families during meal time is the best way to know if residents like the food. Know appropriate questions to ask using this chart.

Cooking the Food

In order to be palatable and safe meats are always cooked to the required temperatures. Undercooked meats may make someone sick due to bacteria that is naturally in the animals. Be sure to follow the cooking temperatures not only so your food tastes good, but also to make it safe and sanitary for the residents. Always use a thermometer to measure the internal temperatures of meats before the cooking process is stopped. Continue cooking until the right temperature is reached. The following charts are a guideline line for cooking meats.

PROTEIN TYPE	USDA MINIMUM RECOMMENDED
Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Other Fowl	
Whole, parts, stuffed or ground – well done	165°F breast, 175°F thigh
Beef, Lamb	
Well done	155°F
Ground - well done	160°F
Pork	
Ground - well done	160°F
Fish, Shellfish	
Broiled, baked or fried	145°F
Eggs	
Poached, boiled, scrambled or fried	145°F

If you have worked in restaurants you have served meats that are rare, medium rare and medium well. This is not the practice in

Grind

To reduce a food to fine particles using a mortar and pestle, blender or food processor.

Julienne

Slice vegetables in thin strips

Purée

To reduce a food to fine smooth pate using a fork, mortar and pestle, blender or food processor.

Roux

Brown a mixture of flour and fat.

Simmer

Cooking foods just under the boiling point

Temper

Slowly raising the temperature of a liquid by adding a small amount of hot such as in temper eggs or gravy

Zest

Gratin the outer skin of a citrus fruit to incorporate as a flavoring in other foods or use as garnish

PLATE PRESENTATION

Criteria for Attractive Plate Presentation

1. Arrange food well on the plate and select appropriate food combinations
2. Cut sandwiches in varied shapes to add interest
3. Use appropriate glassware and plates; correct size, clean, free of chips, marks and stains
4. Serve high water content foods in separate bowls or ramekins and place in plate or on the side to avoid running together
5. Use bread & butter plates or bread bags; do not place bread on same plate as the meal

GARNISHES

Definition

A garnish is an *edible ornament which is added to a dish to improve food appearance and taste.*



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Did you know that...?

All cooks are responsible for the accuracy, taste& appearance of the meals being served. Food must look good, taste good, and be what the residents want to eat so they will eat it.

SERVING THE FOOD

Getting Ready to Serve

Meal service time should go smoothly, start on time and end of time without unnecessary noise and activity. Cooks and diet aides need a quiet environment to focus on plate presentation and service accuracy. Kitchens are often busy and noisy, but a few steps will improve this and help those serving the meal pay complete attention to their task at hand. These simple steps will help decrease noise level and distractions.

- Make sure tray tickets are organized and in order so that residents seating together get their food at the same time, and are clean & legible.
- Check the census sheet and ensure that all “specials” are ready.
- Have all alternates and substitutes prepared and kept at the correct temperature
- Always prepare a few extra portions for those asking for second helpings or late admissions. Accidents happen and if a plate is dropped another meal needs to be available to replace it
- Experienced cooks have a few extra sandwiches ready to be

Delivery

- Store perishable foods before dry and other non-perishables.
- Do not leave perishable foods on a loading dock or at room temperature.
- If you see any signs of damage to packages when receiving deliveries do not accept them; mark them damaged on the invoice, sign, have the driver sign and notify your manager a replacement is needed.

Refrigeration

- Repeated handling increases the possibility of introducing harmful bacteria, especially to meat and poultry.
- Leave products in the product wrapper, unless it is torn or otherwise damaged.
- If the product wrapper is torn, rewrap the product in plastic or aluminum foil and seal tightly to prevent moisture loss. If product is rewrapped it must be labeled with contents and date.
- Rotate stock, using *first in, first out* (FIFO).
- Do not keep foods past storage guidelines.

Freezing

- Some frozen meats may exhibit freezer burn (white, dried-out patches on the surface of meat). Freezer burn is not harmful, but does affect taste and quality.

Handwashing

All dietary employees will use proper handwashing techniques at the designated handwashing sink before starting to work, before and after handling raw food, and after each break to ensure sanitary food and prevent cross-contamination.

1. Pull down paper towel.
2. Wash hands well with soap under warm running water, giving particular attention to nails and cuticles.
3. Rinse well.
4. Use paper towel to dry hands and to turn off water.
5. Wash hands before beginning work, after leaving and returning to the kitchen, and in-between performing different tasks.





Correct position when mopping

General cleaning

The dietary department has a schedule of equipment that needs cleaning, when and how to clean it and who is scheduled to do it. This is called a cleaning schedule and it should be posted. All staff is responsible for following the cleaning schedule and signing it as required. The safety and sanitation of the food depends on the cleanliness of the dietary department and everyone working in it.

Everyone must take pride in a clean kitchen!

COMPETENCIES

These are the course objectives. How do you meet them?

- **State the importance of nutrition for the elderly**
- **Name and define the house diets used in your community**
- **Use the menu to prepare and serve the meals**
- **Use the recipes to prepare the meals correctly & accurately**
- **List the four general areas to monitor when evaluating the quality of a meal**
- **List three important sanitation practices**

This is a self-test to help you decide how much you have learned. Some of the answers are provided, and others you can look up in what you've just read. There may be some things you did not read here, but should be common knowledge and available in any of your other resources or during your previous training.

COOK COMPETENCIES

Q& A - choose the correct answers

Q: Is it ok to use the food preparation sink for handwashing if it's closer to where you are?

A: No, only the handwashing sink can be used for washing hands to:

- 1. Avoid contamination of the preparation sink and any foods that may be washed in it*
- 2. Use the hand sanitizing soap kept only in that sink*

Q: How long can opened cottage cheese be stored in the refrigerator?

- 1 week – the package expiration date is only valid until the product is opened*

Q: When wearing gloves it's OK to touch open the refrigerator with them on, then keep on working to save time.

A: No, gloves must be changed every time other surfaces are touched or work station is changed. The correct method is to:

- 1. Remove gloves*
- 2. Wash & dry hands*
- 3. Wear clean gloves*

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