



The Association
of UK Dietitians



Older People

Specialist Group

Newsletter March 2020

Covid - 19
Guidance

Covid - 19

We know that up and down the UK, dietitians are working in partnership in both acute and community settings to support the effort against Covid-19. The committee has been working hard to produce guidance and info graphics both to support you and the general public.

The BDA is posting up to date guidance for dietitians on its website where you will find useful links and information:

Advice for dietitians:

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/covid-19-coronavirus.html>

Advice for the general public:

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/covid-19-corona-virus-advice-for-the-general-public.html>

Over the coming weeks our priorities are to support the guidance for emergency food supplies for elderly people in the community, continue to create guidance for both our own dietitians and the general public and to work alongside large organisations in the UK to ensure the care of older people is top priority.

If you have any suggestions to share or success stories in your area, please share them with us at olderpeople@bda.uk.com

Alison's Updates

Chairperson

Who would have thought we would all be here, less than 3 months after Coronavirus was first reported? It's very easy to feel helpless about the current situation but as RDs we have a lot to offer the NHS & the general public. Continue to remind friends & family to stay at home unless absolutely necessary & continue to support good nutritional care both in the acute setting & in the wider community by proactively working with other agencies to support provision of food to the older population who are likely to be self isolating. **Keep safe all.**



Save the date: After working alongside the BDA and the Studio we have been successful in booking a new date for our study day on November 2nd 2020.

NDR-UK Older People Resources Coming Soon!

NDR-UK and the BDA Older People Specialist Group have reviewed and updated the following resources:

Eating for Health aims to support older adults in meeting their nutritional needs, empowering them to eat and drink for health, and helping to maximize their quality of life (previously Do You Have a Small Appetite).

Eating for Health with Diabetes aims to empower frail older adults (aged 65 years and over) with Type 2 diabetes to improve their health and quality of life through diet and lifestyle (previously Eating Well and Keeping Well with Diabetes).

Eating for Health and Eating for Health with Diabetes will soon be available digitally via NDR Prescribe to support remote, online and telephone consultations with patients team at info@ndr-uk.org



Visit www.ndr-uk.org to register. For more information or to request complimentary credits, email the NDR-UK

CAN FOODS BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM?

BDA The Association of UK Dietitians
Older People Specialist Group

COVID-19

Understandably, people are worried about COVID-19 (the new coronavirus) and want to do anything they can to avoid catching it. This fear has unfortunately allowed misinformation to spread regarding food and immunity.

CAN WE 'BOOST' THE IMMUNE SYSTEM VIA DIET?



This is actually a misunderstanding of how the immune system works. A healthy immune system likes to be in balance and it is more helpful to talk about how foods can support its 'normal' or 'ideal' functioning. An immune system which is overactive, can actually lead to problems such as allergies or autoimmune conditions.

SHOULD WE TAKE FOOD SUPPLEMENTS?



Unfortunately, there is no convincing evidence to suggest taking supplements will give us advanced disease-fighting powers - especially in the midst of a pandemic. Luckily for us, food - by nature - is handily packaged with a mixture of different nutrients to support a healthy immune system. Eating a variety of different foods helps the body get everything it needs from our diet.



Many of us are having to stay indoors more than usual due to the new coronavirus. As we normally get vitamin D from the sun, people with little or no sun exposure should consider taking 10 micrograms supplement each day (even in spring/summer months). Vitamin D can be purchased from supermarkets or pharmacies.

CAN ANY FOODS PROTECT US FROM COVID-19?



It is strongly recommended to avoid taking foods or supplements advertised as 'immune boosting' or 'COVID-19 protective' in an attempt to protect us from this virus. Examples include eating garlic, or taking herbal remedies.

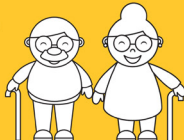


Although enticing, there is no robust evidence that these methods work. They could also distract us from doing the things which really help to stop the infection spreading - such as thorough hand washing and social distancing.

Developed in partnership with The Rooted Project and the BDA Older People's Specialist Group

HELPING OLDER ADULTS KEEP WELL COVID-19

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1 ACCESSING FOOD

Those self-isolating, particularly older adults, may not be able to access food easily. Take advantage of shopping hours set aside for older people. If you have an older neighbour or family member, check in with them often to support them with shopping and accessing food.



2 MEETING NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

The period of self isolation means that older adults need to pay extra attention to their dietary needs, ensuring they get all the minerals and vitamins they require. Current guidelines advise those over the age of 65 to take 10 micrograms of Vitamin D each day as a supplement, which are available at most pharmacies and supermarkets.



3 INCREASING NUTRIENTS

The energy, protein and other nutrients in normal meals can be boosted by adding things like skimmed milk powder, cheese, ground nuts. Even if you just add 4 tablespoons skimmed milk powder to each pint of full fat milk it will add extra calories, protein and a range of vital vitamins and minerals.



4 PREPARING AHEAD

Could you help prepare a store cupboard of non-perishable basic foods, pre-prepared and/or frozen meals? Having some pre-prepared meals in the freezer can ensure sufficient nutrient intake. Frozen fruit and vegetables can be a better source of vitamins C than tinned food and many common items like milk can be stored in a freezer until needed.



5 SOCIAL PRESCRIBING & SOCIAL SERVICES

Social prescribing allows access to a range of non-clinical services that support an individual's overall wellbeing. Your local team may be able to signpost you to key services including delivery of emergency food packs and loneliness support.



6 MEAL DELIVERY SERVICES

Can you access a meal at home delivery service such as Wiltshire Farm Foods, Oakhouse Foods or ParleyBox? Some local councils also offer meals on wheels services that can deliver a hot meal directly to the door. Many of these meals are especially designed to help you meet all of your nutrient needs.



7 REDUCE ISOLATION

Technology may be daunting for some but simple tools can allow you to keep in touch and reduce social isolation. A telephone call each day can be reassuring and supportive. Consider posting the daily paper through the door, puzzle books or for those that are able the library can be accessed online.



8 FOLLOW TRUSTED ADVICE

Follow advice from trusted sources to get the most reliable information. People cannot 'boost' their immune system through diet, and there are no specific foods or supplements which will prevent catching COVID-19/Coronavirus. Check out the British Dietetic Association food fact sheets for reliable information.



Developed in partnership with Vittoria Romano and the BDA Older People Specialist Group

Graphics produced by the Older People specialist group in partnership with The Rooted Project.
Please share far and wide!

Guidance for you

OPSG member and NNS England & Improvement Fellow Vittoria Romano & OPSG chair Alison, this week produced guidance for dietitians supporting individuals both in their own home and care homes.

[COVID-19 - Recommendations for community action by dietitians supporting care homes &](#)

[COVID-19 - Recommendations for action by dietitians supporting care agencies working in older people's own homes](#)

Community RDs may play a role in identifying tools for remote support, encouraging continued nutritional screening where possible and supporting food provision including interacting with wholesale providers to continue supplying items needed to fortify food and drinks.

[COVID-19 - Recommendations for community action by dietitians for older and vulnerable people living in their own home](#)

The AHP leadership team for England is hosting a Nutritional Care & COVID-19 discussion forum on the [FutureNHS](#) National AHP Virtual Hub within the COVID-19 Incident Response Forum. All dietetic leads and Chief AHPs in England are invited to join.

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PENG Parenteral & Enteral Nutrition
Specialist Group

Pocket Guide Critical Care resources available

The BDA PEN Group have provided downloadable versions of the relevant Critical Care sections from the PENG Pocket Guide to Clinical Nutrition. These are being made available for this period of time so that dietitians who are being deployed into areas in which they do not normally work, have the most up to date clinical information about practice.

CALLING ALL:



Article writers



Award winners



Resource hunters



Event attendees

A day in the life?
Research updates?
New tools?

If you have something to share with the OPSG community - we would love to hear from you.



#WeCommunities

WeAHPS hosted a twitter chat titled "Nutrition and Hydration is an important part of quality care" using #WeAHPs. You can catch up with the conversation [here](#).

Keeping in touch!

Check out some of the many ways you can keep in touch with the OPSG:



Send us an email:

olderpeople@bda.uk.com



Follow us on Twitter:

[@BDA_olderpeople](https://twitter.com/BDA_olderpeople)



Follow us on Instagram:

[BDA_olderpeople](https://www.instagram.com/BDA_olderpeople)

Don't forget to check out the BDA website too for up and coming events.

Did you know we have a discussion forum?
It's a great place to post all your queries, questions and comments as well as allowing our OPSG members to share knowledge through your answers and responses

Edited by Simone Roberts