

Help sheet no. 1

Introduction to Well for life help sheets

Nutrition and physical activity are key factors in maintaining the wellbeing of residents in all residential facilities. These factors are also interrelated – good nutrition is integral to maintaining good health, muscle and bone strength and, therefore, the ability to exercise. In turn, participating in physical activity can improve appetite and increase muscle mass.

With nutrition and physical activity working together and being promoted by staff and involving carers and family, residents have the potential to benefit through reduced illness and disability, improved functioning, reduced risk of falling and enhanced emotional wellbeing. All of these factors reflect a facility that is concerned with the wellbeing of their residents and that works towards quality improvements. Improving residents' health can also provide economic benefits, however, this will not be the primary goal of a best practice facility.

Developing the help sheets

This series of help sheets was developed as part of the Well for Life Project by a team of researchers from the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI), accredited practising dietitians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and other health professionals. The topics cover issues and questions raised by aged care facility staff and health professionals. They are based on research evidence and expert opinion on best practice. The help sheets focus on topics identified through the course of this project; the list of possible topics has not been exhausted.

It is hoped that the information in these help sheets will raise awareness of the literature and organisations available to provide further information.

Using the help sheets

These help sheets are to be used as a guide. They direct you to references for more technical and clinical information. Not all of the help sheets relate directly to all residential settings but in most cases the information can be adapted using common sense and working within facility procedures.

Literature reviews on nutrition and physical activity were developed through the Well for Life Project and these provide the evidence base for the help sheets. (The literature reviews can be obtained from NARI.)

For more information about the Well for Life Project or to provide feedback on the help sheets, visit our website at: www.nari.unimelb.edu.au