

Help sheet no. 29

How staff benefit from Well for life

Most of the suggestions in the help sheets focus on the benefits of promoting exercise and nutrition for residents. These suggestions, however, may be viewed by some staff as 'yet more work!'. This sheet points out the benefits that staff receive when using the approaches recommended in the help sheets.

Not enough time!

Time constraints are usually the most significant barriers to promoting nutrition and activity or any change to practice within residential facilities. Initially, promoting activity and nutrition may be more time consuming; however, in the long term, time can be saved. Promoting nutrition and activity can save time as:

- Residents who are more mobile generally require less assistance for showering, dressing and going to the toilet.
- Residents who can walk independently to their meals may save staff the time it takes to get wheelchairs out and assist residents to the table. This is a long term goal and something in which staff need to persevere.
- Residents who are more mobile, active and better nourished are generally happier and more interactive. This can promote socialising between residents and less need for staff to provide all social contact.
- Residents who are well nourished are likely to be stronger and require less assistance than those who are poorly nourished.
- Involving families in activities and meal assistance may assist staff.
- Well nourished residents have fewer health problems, for example, pressure ulcers and infections, which may result in lower demands on nursing time.
- Improving communication between staff may minimise time wasting. Good communication strategies enable staff to keep up to date on new procedures and avoid duplication and performing tasks that are no longer necessary.
- Reviewing current practices may highlight areas where time is not managed well.

As well as saving time, promoting nutrition and activity can provide physical benefits to staff. Residents who are able to weight-bear place fewer physical demands on staff during transfers and other personal care tasks. Staff may notice less back strain when residents are able to perform tasks more independently.

Happier residents are generally less demanding. This may also promote a happier working environment where residents can be respected and staff can find more satisfaction in their work.

In summary, improving the nutrition and activity levels of residents can promote independence and, thereby, save time, be less physically demanding and make work more rewarding.

Importantly, the principles of good practice and good quality care underpin the information presented in the help sheets.