



NUTRITION, FOOD SERVICE & DINING IN LTC

The Best Practices within this document are recommendations to support regulatory compliance to Ontario LTC legislation, promote optimal nutrition and hydration care and support person centered care. It is important to note however, that Residents' rights and preferences are paramount and should be respected regardless of legislation or best practice. The Best Practice Document is based on resources and expertise from industry professionals and where applicable, are evidence-based. This is a living document that will transition with the evolution of the industry over time.

SUBJECT: FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT	Revised: 2023-07-28
ONTARIO REGULATION 246/22 made under the FIXING LONG-TERM CARE ACT, 2021	
Nutritional Care and Hydration Programs	
Table of Contents: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purpose & Scope 2. Key Concepts 3. Practice Recommendations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Food Safety b. Census and Forecasting c. Inventory d. Purchasing e. Receiving f. Storage g. Recipes h. Production Sheets 4. Home Specific Policies, Roles & Responsibilities 5. Resources & Tools 6. Evidence & References 	

1. Purpose & Scope

- The dietary department is responsible for producing and serving of meals and snacks that are healthy, safe, nutritious, and enjoyable for residents living in long-term care (LTC) The goal is to provide meals and snacks that allow residents to maintain or improve their physical health while contributing to the social and pleasurable aspects of communal dining.





NUTRITION, FOOD SERVICE & DINING IN LTC

2. Key Concepts

- The management of the dietary department is responsible to provide safe and nutritious food. This is accomplished in many ways including the purchasing and receiving forecasting, maintaining food quality, inventory management, standardized recipes and portion control.
- All food and beverages are to be prepared and provided in a clean, safe environment using methods that consistently result in nutritious, safe, and personally acceptable meals for residents.

3. Practice Recommendations

a. Food Safety

- Food safety management minimizes food contamination risks from bacteria, viruses, mold, parasites, chemicals, and physical contaminants such as wood, metal, and glass. Food safety is dependent on temperature control, cleanliness of food, the food environment, and personal hygiene and health of staff preparing and serving the food.
- Education:
 - Every staff member completes Certified Food Handler training every 5 years.
 - Every staff member has IPAC training for general infection prevention and control when hired and annually at minimum thereafter.
- Personal Hygiene/Grooming:
 - Staff conduct hand hygiene every time after using the toilet, going to, or returning from break, eating, drinking, smoking, coughing, sneezing, handling cell phones, and handling money. Wash hands after handling raw meat or any raw product and when changing tasks. Wash hands before and after assisting and serving residents.
 - To wash hands, lather hands with liquid soap for 20 seconds before rinsing and drying hands with paper towels. Use paper towel to turn off tap. If hands are not visibly dirty, hand sanitizer may be used.
 - Wear a clean uniform. Change your apron as often as necessary. Wear a hairnet at all times.
- Equipment Temperatures:
 - Refrigerators and freezer temperatures are checked and recorded a minimum of twice daily. Refrigerator temperature should be 0 – 4°C, freezers should be -18°C or less.
 - Dishwasher wash and sanitize temperatures are checked and recorded at every meal. The sanitation temperature should be 82°C. If machine uses chemicals for sanitizing, the concentration of the sanitizer is checked for the correct strength and recorded.





NUTRITION, FOOD SERVICE & DINING IN LTC

- Pot wash sanitizer is checked and recorded for correct strength. Iodine, chlorine or quat ammonia can be used for sanitizing in amounts following chemical label and SDS.
- **Food Handling:**
 - If gloves are worn, they must be changed between tasks, with hands washed before and after donning/doffing. Gloves can be used only once.
 - Food is kept out of the danger zone (4 – 60°C) as much as possible during preparation and production. Do not keep potentially hazardous food at room temperature for more than 2 hours in total. If temperature is out of range, corrective action should be taken as per home policy and procedures. Follow HACCP critical control points to be sure that food is safe prior to serving.
 - Follow temperature cooking chart for various foods and use a cooking thermometer to check internal food temperatures while cooking. Recalibrate thermometers minimum weekly.
 - Date and label open food items and use within 2 to 5 days, depending on product and/or product instructions.
 - Defrost raw meats and raw hazardous foods in refrigerator, on bottom shelf, in high sided pans to catch defrosting meat juices.
- **Cross Contamination:**
 - Use knives and cutting boards with only one food, then clean and sanitize before using again.
 - Scoops used in food bins, e.g. sugar, flour, etc., and ice machines to be washed after every use and stored outside of food bins.
 - Wash can openers after every use.
- **Kitchen Cleanliness:**
 - Clean equipment after every use as per staff training, or after every 2 hours if being used continuously.
 - Prepare and follow a cleaning schedule that includes all equipment and utensils in the kitchen and serveries.
 - Ensure floors, walls, and ceilings are kept clean of food particles and any debris. Remove boxes and garbage frequently.
 - Ensure that a professional pest control company provides preventative service to minimize pests in the department.
 - Ensure the environment is maintained to limit the access/presence of pests.
- **Chemicals:**
 - Keep chemicals stored separately from food items. Do not allow chemicals to be kept in food production or food service areas.



NUTRITION, FOOD SERVICE & DINING IN LTC

b. Census and Forecasting

- The diet census is used to know how much food to buy and prepare for each diet, texture and fluid consistency combination. This requires frequent updating as residents move in, go to hospital, take vacation, or pass away. The census is posted in the kitchen near the recipes and production lists or within electronic displays.
- Standardized food production regulations include a minimum of three meals, two snack and three beverage opportunities/passes between meals.
- Menu items must be prepared in sufficient quantities for all regular and therapeutic diets, texture modified meals, modified fluid consistencies, special snacks and nutritional supplements required by the resident population.
- Production sheets are to be updated as required to meet current census needs.

c. Inventory

- The flow of the inventory record should match/follow how goods are stored, shelf by shelf in the different storage areas. This makes inventory a more efficient process.
- Some items will be purchased only when needed on the menu, while others are always available.
- Using the menu, create a “par stock” or minimum order for goods that are always in use at the home.
- The inventory is checked before purchasing to improve accuracy of amounts needed for production without overstocking. Ensure that inventory is checked in all storage areas including serveries.

d. Purchasing

- Menu items and food products are purchased, received, stored, prepared, held and served to:
 - Ensure appropriate food product selection considering quality, cost, and acceptance by residents.
 - Prevent contamination, spoilage and food-borne illness.
 - Retain maximum nutritive value, Flavour, colour, texture and appearance.
 - Ensure effective standardized food production.
 - Ensure delivery of all residents’ meals, snacks, and special snacks in the correct location in a timely fashion.





NUTRITION, FOOD SERVICE & DINING IN LTC

- Consistently result in personally acceptable and visually appealing meals and snacks for all residents contributing to overall satisfaction.
- The purchasing process includes taking inventory, placing orders from trusted suppliers, accepting deliveries, and storing food products until they are needed for the menu.
- Orders are placed by telephone, computer, or fax, as arranged with the supplier.
- There are formal contracts with suppliers or an arrangement so that prices, or price ranges, are known in advance of placing an order.
- Code numbers may be used with large suppliers, to differentiate one product from another, e.g., small fruit cans versus large fruit cans.
- The person ordering knows how much of each item to purchase based on census, menu and forecasting, so there are no menu shortages. It may be helpful to keep a written list of which food items are required for the menu from each supplier every week, so nothing is forgotten.

e. Receiving

- A responsible staff member checks orders when they are delivered.
- Delivery slips/invoices accompanying the products delivered include the quantity and cost of each item.
- The staff cross-checks the original order to the delivery, checking for number of pieces of each item delivered.
- Be aware of dirty containers, signs of pests, improperly refrigerated or frozen foods, bulging or dented cans, best before dates outdated or unknown.
- Delivery trucks are occasionally checked to ensure they are clean, and fridge and freezer temperatures are correct.
- Food deliveries are put away as soon as they arrive in the kitchen in their designated locations. Frozen items are stored first, then refrigerated items, and then storage room goods.
- Items can be unpacked from boxes. Boxes can then be flattened and removed from the kitchen area.





NUTRITION, FOOD SERVICE & DINING IN LTC

- Damaged goods including dented cans should never be accepted due to the risk of food borne illness and should be removed from the storage room and returned for a refund.
- Paperwork related to deliveries is kept in a designated area to promote timely payment.

f. Storage

- Food storage areas (including shelving) are maintained, and food items are rotated to ensure “First In, First Out.” This will aid in minimizing spoilage, waste and decrease in quality.
- Put foods away promptly in their correct areas following the FIFO (first in, first out) method of storage. Ensure shelves and floors in storage areas are clean, dry, and safe.
- Remove boxes and packaging so they are out of the kitchen area.
- Storage rooms, refrigerators, and freezers are organized, so that taking inventory and unpacking deliveries are efficient and logical.
- Every food item should have a pre-determined storage location and like items stored together. For example:
 - In dry storage, all breakfast cereals are stored on the same shelves, tomato products (e.g., canned tomatoes, tomato sauce, and tomato puree) are stored together, and breakfast items such as jam and peanut butter are all found on the same shelf.
 - In the refrigerator, fresh fruits are together, fresh vegetables are together, cheeses together, etc.
- Keep one bottom shelf empty to be used only to defrost meat or hold raw meat, laid out in high sided pans so there are no drips on the floor, and to avoid cross-contamination from meat juices leaking onto cooked food or fruits/vegetables.

g. Recipes

- Standardized recipes are used to prepare all food and beverages for all textures and fluid consistencies and include:
 - Item name and number of servings in the recipe
 - Ingredient quantities by weight, measure, volume, or count
 - Portion size, yield, and appropriate serving utensil
 - Panning information





NUTRITION, FOOD SERVICE & DINING IN LTC

- Method or procedure for combining ingredients
- Time and temperatures for cooking or baking
- Heating and chilling requirements at various stages of production and requirements for monitoring temperatures at these stages as required (i.e., HACCP guidelines)
- Final internal temperatures of foods
- Production time and time required for panning/baking/heating and serving/holding.
- Methods for adjusting recipe yields if required.
- The initial recipe/accompanying recipe includes instructions on how to texture modify all items,
 - i.e., size to cut pieces prior to processing, when to add liquid and/or thickening agent, what type of liquid to add, how to return to safe, palatable temperatures.
 - If a separate recipe is needed for texture-modified foods, it is noted on the original recipe.
- Instructions for texture modified items identifies whether measuring and/or processing takes place before or after product is fully cooked.
- Final portion size for texture modified products should be consistent with regular products.

h. Production Sheets

- Production sheets break down the amounts of food and fluid needed for each diet and texture and quantities to be sent to each unit / home area.
- It is best that production sheets are detailed so nothing is missed. Different staff may be responsible for hot and cold foods. As with the census and order guides, numbers may need to be updated frequently to account for changes in the resident population.
- The production sheets include items required for snacks, items that may need pre-preparation and/or thawing for future meals.
- The production sheet lets cooks know exactly what and how much to prepare. It includes the diets and textures of every resident eating the meals. If staff also eat the meals or there is catering that the cooks need to prepare for the day, there should be a separate line for these meals as well.

i. Equipment and Environment

- Ensure adequate and appropriate equipment and utensils are available to produce menu as planned.
- Equipment is monitored for need of maintenance and/or replacement. Replace worn items as needed e.g. cutting boards.





NUTRITION, FOOD SERVICE & DINING IN LTC

- A preventative maintenance program is recommended to extend the life of equipment and avoid costly repairs.
- Check that the environment is kept clean and in good repair. Floors, walls, ceilings are clean with no damage or cracks, to maintain a safe environment and limit pests.
- Cleaning schedules, including a deep cleaning schedule, are recommended to help maintain equipment and environment. (Cleaning tasks should be initiated as they are completed.)
- Develop a plan and budget for ongoing repairs and safety concerns on an annual basis.

4. Home Specific Policies, Roles & Responsibilities

- Policies and procedures for food production include as a minimum:
 - HACCP principles, including time and temperature guidelines for food purchasing, storage, preparation, holding, and service
 - Purchasing procedures including ordering, receiving, food storage and delivery
 - Standardized food production guidelines including portion control
 - Procedures for taste testing
 - Procedures for taking and documenting food temperatures, sanitation, and regular calibration of thermometers
 - Guidelines for safe operation, cleaning, and maintenance of equipment
 - Employee health and safety in the kitchen and food service areas
 - Cleaning guidelines and schedules for production, service and ware washing areas
 - Procedures for waste management, may include topics such as recycling, compost, solid waste, liquid waste, hazardous waste e.g., broken glass

5. Resources & Tools

- Food Safety: A Guide for Ontario's Food Handlers
https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/9953-Food_Handlers_training_manual.pdf

6. Evidence & References

- Restaurants Canada. Food Safety Code of Practice for Canada's Foodservice Industry. 2013.
- Mayerson D, Thompson K. Menu Planning in LTC & Retirement Homes: A Comprehensive Guide, 2019.

