

Nutrition and Hydration Stations

AT PRIMROSE BANK

Primrose Bank Care Home in Poulton-le-Fylde, which was crowned Care Establishment of the Year at the NACC Awards 2018, has established popular 'Nutrition & Hydration Stations' that help keep residents nourished, hydrated and independent. Nick Dutton, the operations manager, tells us more.

Like any other care home, we know that our residents value their independence and want to maintain as much of it as possible for as long as possible. We also know that hydration is key to everyone's wellbeing and we find malnutrition always a concern, especially in those who are new to our service or are coming in for respite care.

We set about creating new 'Nutrition and Hydration Stations' a couple of years ago, after hearing of some great examples at the NACC Training and Development Forum in 2018. They have evolved through quite a few stages of change and constant improvement. What started as conveniently placed spare trolleys with some biscuits and jugs of juice has now turned into a full station, with fridge, coffee machine and a variety of snacks.

My main advice to any other care home looking to do something similar would be to keep making small changes and make sure all residents and staff have an input.

Residents really enjoy the ability to help themselves to food and drink, without assistance, and being able to make their own choices as to what they would like to have and when to have it. We find this has really helped those residents who prefer to graze and eat little and often. The ability to sit with a friend and enjoy a cappuccino or latte at any time of day has led to the areas around the stations to become hubs of conversations and activity.

Although the focus was increasing resident independence to access food and drink, the other main benefit has been that staff now find it much easier to access drinks and snacks to offer to residents who are less independent and require prompting and assistance. This has made it much simpler for staff to help residents who might be suffering from malnutrition and we have definitely seen a positive result now that we are in a position to look over a reliable timeframe of data.

Apart from fresh fruit and snacks, which are freshly made in house by the chefs, all of our snack items on the stations are individually packaged and can be stored at ambient temperature. This helps keep waste to a minimum by making stock rotation easy, and hygiene and food safety easy to manage. Through our supplier, Brakes, we put together an online 'favourites' list of items for the station, so any member of the catering team can easily add them to our order so the station never runs short.

We found the 'fruitypots' to be a real hit with residents. They taste great and are excellent for boosting hydration levels, with fresh fruit in either a jelly or fruit juice. It's also handy that they come with their own spoon inside. Single-serve cartons of juice are also always available in the small fridge we installed to keep them cool and refreshing.





Primrose Bank Care Home in Poulton-le-Fylde

We have a range of snacks to help residents get extra calories in between meals. Single-serve Ambrosia custard and rice pudding pots have been a great addition to the station and are an easy way to add an extra 120 calories into a daily intake.

The stations take various forms throughout the day. In the morning they are more likely to be found with breakfast goods, so residents can help themselves to Danish pastries and homemade fortified smoothies. By the evening, there will be wine available, with cheese and biscuits.

One of the hardest things to get right has been the coffee machine. We have trialled various models to try and find one that is easy to use, cost efficient and requires the least input from staff to maintain. We are now on our fourth coffee machine, but it seems to be doing the right job – it's certainly worth persevering to get it right. Alongside the coffee machine we have a variety of teas and fruit teas. We recently tried the cold brew tea bags and they were very popular.

While residents are the main users of the nutrition and hydration station, we find that families and visitors also benefit from being able to help themselves to teas, coffees and snacks at any time and it really makes them feel at home.

ADAPTING TO COVID-19

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic obviously meant we had to review our 'Nutrition & Hydration Stations' to keep staff and residents safe. The main change was that everything became single serve and individually wrapped. We also reduced the amount of fresh food on the stations so that the kitchen team could focus on the core meals, especially with the possibility of unexpected staff shortages.

The stations have remained vital during the pandemic. Staff can quickly grab snacks and treats to keep moral up for residents who need to isolate. In fact, we are now more likely to increase the amount of stations we have around the home. While they obviously won't be the social hubs they were, it will make them even more accessible.

We'll keep risk assessing the stations in line with each piece of guidance that comes out. We very much look forward to the day

that it is safe to welcome visitors back into the home. I'm sure the 'Nutrition and Hydration Stations' will have plenty of wine and beer when that time comes!



A Primrose Bank Nutrition and Hydration Station

NICK DUTTON

If you have any questions for Nick about the Nutrition & Hydration Stations, he's very happy for you to contact him.

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