



CARE CHEF

OF THE YEAR 2024

NUTRITIONAL GUIDANCE

WHAT THE NUTRITION JUDGES ARE LOOKING FOR

1. That you understand what a balanced diet means for your client group when menu planning
 2. That you can cook a balanced meal (containing adequate starchy carbohydrate, protein, vitamins and minerals)
 3. That you know how to add additional nutrition to foods using nutrient dense ingredients, especially where dishes are low in nutrients such as protein and you demonstrate that you can apply your knowledge
 4. That each course is nutritionally balanced, that is, your main AND your dessert
- This link is useful for a guide: www.thenacc.co.uk/what-we-do/share-knowledge/creating-a-fortified-diet-for-care-home-caterers-for-more-guidance
 - **Definition of nutrient dense:** a food or ingredient which contains a wide range of nutrients including energy, protein, vitamins and minerals, and may also contain fibre. The easiest way to tell if an ingredient is 'nutrient dense' is to ask yourself whether it is something designed by nature to support a new life, e.g. egg (which could 'grow' a baby bird), whole seeds or nuts (from which a new plant could grow) or milk (which would 'grow' a baby animal)
 - If the answer is yes, then it is likely to be a useful ingredient for fortifying food for people who have, or are at risk of malnutrition
 - **Your understanding of the overall nutritional needs of your residents such as:**
 - Malnutrition (low body weight, unplanned weight loss, poor appetite and poor food intake)
 - Dehydration (poor fluid intake)
 - Dysphagia (swallowing difficulties)
 - Dementia (causing poor food intake, lack of interest in food, lack of ability to recognise hunger or thirst or to request food or fluid, changed food preferences, dysphagia, malnutrition, difficulty focussing on meals/drinks, difficulties with eating and drinking linked to reduced understanding of what to do)
 - Frailty/sarcopenia (loss of muscle mass/function reducing mobility and independence and increasing risk of falls)
 - **Statements about vitamin/mineral contents of specific food ingredients are not helpful to include** so please avoid these. Don't make a health claim about something eg nutrient "X" can cure alzheimers and don't make a nutrition claim eg rich in "Y" unless you are very clear on the therapeutic level required and why
 - **Statements such as "easy to digest" are not helpful to include** so please avoid these