

THE DEMENTIA ROADMAP

Compassion. Guidance. Hope.

MEALTIME & NUTRITION

Small Changes. Better Mealtimes.

Changes in vision, coordination, attention, and appetite can make mealtimes harder for a person living with dementia. A few simple adjustments can support independence and make eating feel calmer and more manageable.

High-Sided Plates

A high-sided plate has a raised edge that gives the utensil something to push against. This can make scooping food easier and may help keep food on the plate, especially when coordination or one-handed eating is difficult.

Helpful Mealtime Ideas

- **Choose a high-sided plate.** Look for a true plate with a raised rim rather than a deep bowl, so food is still easy to see and reach.
- **Use strong color contrast.** A plate that clearly contrasts with both the food and the table can make the meal easier to see.
- **Keep dishes simple.** Solid colors are usually easier to interpret than busy patterns.
- **Offer finger foods when helpful.** Foods that can be safely picked up may support independence when utensils become frustrating.
- **Reduce distractions.** Keep the table and surrounding area calm and uncluttered during meals.
- **Allow extra time.** Avoid rushing and give the person time to recognize the food, begin eating, and finish at their own pace.
- **Serve familiar favorites.** Familiar smells, flavors, and routines may make eating more comfortable and inviting.

CAREGIVER NOTE: Watch for coughing, choking, pocketing food, repeated difficulty swallowing, or a major change in eating ability. Discuss these concerns with the person's healthcare team.

This printable provides general caregiver education and is not a substitute for individualized medical, nutritional, or swallowing advice.

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