

DIABETES AND MENU PLANNING IN CARE

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In my last Blog, I explained how our Head of Catering Services, Adrian Silaghi and I are currently supporting our Homes in menu planning in preparation for the spring/summer menu.

One of the factors our Catering Teams needs to consider when putting menus together is special diets – one of which is **Diabetes**.

There has been much confusion over the years amongst Health Care professionals and Care Catering teams as to what is and is not acceptable with regards to catering for a person with Diabetes.

My nutrition training always taught me that the right diet for a person with Diabetes is **a balanced, healthy diet.**

When advising our **Care Home** teams on how to provide for those with Diabetes, our advice is lead by National Associations and the health professionals affiliated with them, such as the **National Association for Care Catering (NACC)**.

The NACC has put together a truly comprehensive guide called '*Menu Planning & Dining in Care Homes*' in which Ex Deputy Chair Sophie Murrey writes about the topic of Diabetic diets.

The following is taken from the recent edition of 'Menu Planning & Dining in Care Homes':

Is there such a thing as a Diabetic diet?

In July 2013 Diabetes UK issued a position statement as follows:

"Diabetes UK are calling for an end to the use of such terms as 'diabetic' or 'suitable for diabetics' on food labels. They explained that labelling food as 'diabetic' is unhelpful and misleading for the consumer and implies a health benefit. Some people might see it as a 'stamp of approval' or even essential for people with diabetes. 'Diabetic' foods became popular in the 1960s when Diabetes Care focused on eating a sugar-free diet. Since the 1980s, dietary recommendations have moved away from a sugar-free diet and so the role for special 'diabetic' foods became obsolete over 30 years ago. The truth is that people with diabetes can consume sugar but should be limited as part of a healthy balanced diet. Good blood glucose control can still be achieved when sugar and sugar-containing foods are eaten."

This information is so important for us when menu planning. Our aim is to support those living in our Care and provide the best quality of life possible. **Up-to-date knowledge** and **consistency** are key.

All our menus are carefully reviewed to provide a healthy balanced diet to each resident. Of course, we also cater for preferences and foods that bring comfort and pleasure.