

# NUTRITION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

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**As we age our nutritional needs can change and in times of compromised health, malnutrition, or a change in mobility, the foods we eat may need to be adjusted to suit our requirements.**

Factors such as a person losing a loved one and finding themselves living alone may result in them becoming disinterested in cooking meals for one, and they may find they lose the sense of joy in eating and preparing food.

Further, if a person becomes more sedentary and unable to walk around and keep as busy as they used to, it may mean that they require less calories throughout the day and this could lead to a significant drop in appetite and nourishment.

Both factors are very real circumstances for lots of elderly people living in the UK.

***According to the Caroline Walker Trust 2011 (a), people over the age of 75 years may also experience some of the following changes:***

- *Reduced ability to taste food – especially sweet and salty flavours*
- *Reduced sense of smell which can affect taste*

- *Hearing difficulties and impaired sight*
- *A slowing of the digestive system*
- *A less effective immune system*

When a person comes into our care at **Nellsar**, whether for respite or for long-term living, we make an assessment and take into consideration the **person's nutritional needs, food preferences** and **how we can best provide exactly what they enjoy**.

Some people who have been living on their own for a long term may be underweight and even slightly malnourished or dehydrated, where they have simply lost interest in preparing food for themselves.

We often find that when people come into our care and begin to have meals cooked for them and drinks provided throughout the day, their nutrition and hydration status can improve. When this happens, we know that they are at less risk of falls, confusion, anxiety, might sleep better and are generally in a better place with more energy.

At **Nellsar** we are **big advocates of good food** which is why we have a dedicated senior team; myself, **Leni Wood (Nutritionist)** and **Adrian Silaghi (Head of Catering Services)** who coach and guide our **Homes** in providing the best nutrition and dining environments possible.

#### **References:**

(a) The Caroline Walker Trust is dedicated to the improvement of public health through good food. Established in 1989 to continue the work of the distinguished nutritionist, writer and campaigner Caroline Walker, the Trust is a charity which undertakes specific projects, funded by grants and donations ([www.cwt.org.uk](http://www.cwt.org.uk)).