

# Support Proper Nutrition and Hydration Care

## FAMILY MEMBERS

- You know your loved one better than any one. Tell staff what he or she likes to eat and drink. Discuss strategies for helping him or her get the nourishment and the fluids they need.
- Visit during meal times to encourage your loved one to eat and drink. When in the company of their family, many residents make a much greater effort. They will also have a better appetite when you are around.

## VOLUNTEERS

- Request training to help with resident feedings, if allowed.
- Once you have been trained, become familiar with residents' special needs, food interests and abilities.
- Volunteer to help the activity director with parties, celebrations and other special activities where refreshments and liquids could be served.

## ALL VISITORS

- Make sure there is always a water pitcher within a resident's reach, along with cups/glasses and straws.
- Keep water pitchers filled, but not so heavy that it can't be easily lifted and poured.
- Each time you pass a water fountain when walking with a resident, encourage him or her to have a drink.
- If a resident doesn't like water, offer decaffeinated tea or other liquids.
- Encourage residents to eat foods high in water content, e.g., soups, pudding and ice cream.
- Many residents will suck on ice chips even if they have little interest in eating or drinking. Check with staff to be sure a resident is allowed to have ice chips (it can be dangerous for a person who has trouble swallowing) and then offer frequently.
- When residents request caffeinated drinks like soda and coffee, encourage them to have milk, decaffeinated tea or juice instead. *Remember*, caffeinated drinks do not count as much toward fluid intake!
- If a resident has begun eating or drinking more than usual, alert staff and visitors. He or she will need to visit the bathroom more often!
- Encourage every resident to be independent, to whatever extent is appropriate for them. Find the right balance between giving necessary help and encouragement with letting a person do things for themselves.
- Encourage residents to sit in the sunshine for 20-30 minutes every day. Sunshine is a great source of vitamin D, which is important for the absorption of calcium. People who don't get enough vitamin D and calcium are at higher risk for bone loss and fractures.