

Eating Independently

It is common for people with memory problems to begin to find eating meals a challenge. The old habits we learn at mealtimes, such as how to use a knife and fork together or spooning up soup, can become very hard for some people.

To help at mealtimes, you can:

- **Make finger foods**, such as sandwiches, fruit slices and buns. These foods can make healthy and pleasurable meals, and are much easier to hold and chew. Use your imagination— most food can be adapted to be hand held.
- **Eat slowly; show how a dish is to be eaten.** Once started, the act of feeding oneself may become automatic.
- **Find specially designed utensils** at your local health supply store. These can be easier to grip and better for those with weaker grasps. Large handles and curved utensils can decrease spills.
- **Make simple dishes**, like soup and stew, which are easy to eat and enjoy.
- **Find non-spill cups** that can help avoid messes. Soup can also be offered in a cup. Plates and cups that are bright colours make food they contain easier to see.
- **Use a wet cloth** underneath plates to keep them from slipping during the meal.

As time progresses, mealtimes can become more difficult for people with memory problems. To ensure that everyone enjoys the meal, remember that it is more important to feel good about being able to feed oneself and enjoy food than to always be neat and tidy.