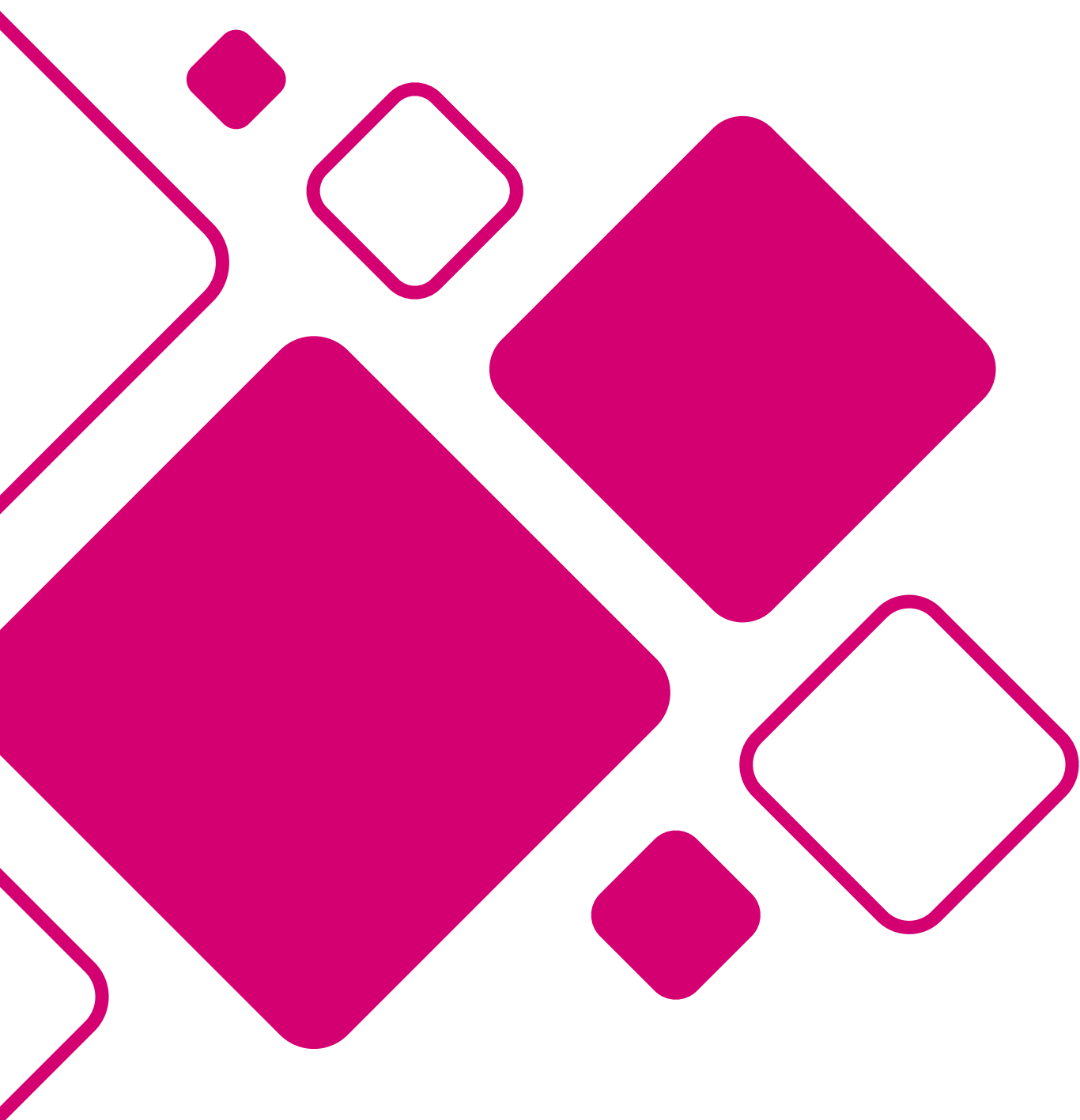


NursingDirect

POLICY NUMBER: **55**

POLICY TITLE: **NUTRITION & HYDRATION**

WHO MUST ABIDE BY THIS POLICY? **ALL STAFF**



NUTRITION & HYDRATION

THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

Nursing Direct encourage staff to assist clients to be treated with dignity when Eating and drinking. Providing a choice of nutritious, appetising meals, that meet the needs and choices of individuals, and support with eating where needed.

Mealtimes aren't just about the food we eat. It's about who you eat it with, where you sit, is it comfortable?

EATING AND NUTRITIONAL CARE IN PRACTICE

- Carry out routine nutritional screening when admitting people to hospital or residential care. Record the dietary needs and preferences of individuals and any assistance they need at mealtimes and ensure staff act on this
- Refer the person for professional assessment if screening raises particular concerns (e.g. speech and language therapy for people with swallowing difficulties, occupational therapy for equipment such as special plates and cutlery, dietician for special dietary needs relating to illness or condition, physiotherapist to assess physical needs and posture).
- Make food look appetising. If the texture of food needs to be modified seek advice from the speech and language therapist. Not all food for people with swallowing difficulties needs to be puréed. Keep different foods separate to enhance the quality of the eating experience.
- If necessary, record food and fluid intake daily and act on the findings.
- Make sure food is available and accessible between mealtimes.
- Give people time to eat; they should not be rushed.
- Provide assistance discreetly to people who have difficulty eating. Use serviettes, not bibs, to protect clothing. Offer finger food to those who have difficulty using cutlery, and provide adapted crockery and cutlery to enable people to feed themselves where appropriate.
- While socialising during mealtimes should be encouraged, offer privacy to those who have difficulties with eating, if they wish, to avoid embarrassment or loss of dignity.
- Ensure that mealtimes are sufficiently staffed to provide assistance to those who need it.
- If there are insufficient staff to support those who need it, introduce a system of staggered mealtimes.
- Develop or make use of existing volunteer schemes to help give support to people at mealtimes.
- Encourage carers, family and friends to visit and offer support at mealtimes.
- Don't make assumptions about people's preferences on the basis of their cultural background – people should be asked what their preferences are?
- Ensure all care staff, including caterers, have access to training.
- Raise awareness of the risk of malnutrition and the importance of providing good nutritional care.

- Ensure staff have the skills to communicate with people who have dementia and communication difficulties. Visual aids, such as pictorial menus, and non-verbal communication skills may help people to make choices.
- For people with communication or cognitive difficulties, gather information on their needs and preferences from people who know them well.
- Ensure that home care staff have sufficient allocated time and the skills to prepare a meal of choice for the person, including freshly cooked meals.
- For residential and day care, implement best practice in food procurement ensuring food is of good quality and is, where possible, local, seasonal and sustainable.
- Carry out regular consultation on menus with people using the service.
- Wherever possible, involve people using the service in meal preparation.
- In residential settings, where access to industrial kitchens is denied, provide facilities for people to make drinks and snacks.
- Ensure that fresh water is on offer at all mealtimes and freely available throughout the day.

HYDRATION

- Encourage people to drink regularly throughout the day. The Food Standards Agency recommends a daily intake of six to eight glasses of water or other fluids.
- Provide education, training and information about the benefits of good hydration to staff, carers and people who use services, and encourage peer-to-peer learning.
- Provide promotional materials to remind people who use services, staff and carers of the importance of hydration
- Ensure there is access to clean drinking water 24 hours a day.
- If people are reluctant to drink water, think of other ways of increasing their fluid intake, for example with alternative drinks and foods that have a higher fluid content, (e.g. breakfast cereals with milk, soup, and fruit and vegetables).
- If people show reluctance to drink because they are worried about incontinence, reassure them that help will be provided with going to the toilet. It may help some people to avoid drinking before bedtime.
- Be aware of urine colour as an indication of hydration level (Water UK, 2005); odourless, pale urine indicates good hydration. Dark, strong-smelling urine could be an indicator of poor hydration – but there may be other causes that should be investigated.

Record and report all issues in notes and to Care Manager.