



Florida REACH Project

Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health

Prescription for Difficulty Getting Your Loved One to Eat

Specific Behavior:

Overall Goal of this Prescription:

Please remember that dealing with challenging behaviors can be stressful. The brief relaxation strategies will help you deal with stress when dealing with this challenge. In particular, we recommend using the signal breath technique immediately before you use the strategies suggested in this behavioral prescription.

Strategies for preventing difficulty with eating (try picking one thing and sticking with it for a few weeks):

- 1. Offer nutritious snacks during the day. This way you can monitor your loved one's nutritional intake, for example, fruit, peanut butter and crackers.**
- 2. Serve smaller portions on your loved one's dish. It maybe too difficult to concentrate on eating a full meal.**
- 3. Use spices to provide a pleasant aroma in the home. Cinnamon and orange potpourri smell appetizing.**
- 4. Tell him/her it's time to eat. Don't ask if he/she wants dinner, as this gives him/her the opportunity to say NO. Offer only 1 or 2 options if you must offer options.**
- 5. Keep the same place setting for your loved one at each meal.**
- 6. Use bold color placement and white dish in order to contrast the plate for him/her.**
- 7. Use assistive devices such as built-up utensils or scoop dishes.**

Other strategies:



Strategies for guiding how you respond during or after a behavior occurs:

- 1. Recognize that your loved one is not as active as he/she once was and therefore doesn't require the same amount of food during the day.**
- 2. Keep a journal of food intake. This way you can recognize the amounts of snacks that he/she is consuming.**
- 3. Discuss this with your doctor. Some medications suppress the appetite.**
- 4. Present food items one at a time.**
- 5. Offer chopped or soft foods, or cut food into small pieces if chewing is a problem.**
- 6. Establish a calm and accepting atmosphere when eating. Do not rush your loved one to finish eating. Engage in calm and pleasant social interaction.**
- 7. Offer smaller nutritious meals more often throughout the day.**

Other strategies:

General Information:

You are a dedicated caregiver and you are doing a great job. We understand that this can be very upsetting to you and are committed to helping you with this challenge. We believe these strategies will help and look forward to working with you in the coming weeks.

Please reach out to the social workers on your clinic team if you have any questions or concerns.