

# Implications of Snacking on Nutrition and Quality of Life in Nursing Home Residents

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## Why focus on snacks?

Food plays an important role in meeting biological, psychological, and social needs, but it is difficult for these needs to be met with current nursing home practices. Neglecting biological needs can lead to malnutrition, which increases mortality, morbidity, vulnerability to infection, and cost of healthcare, while residents' ability to complete activities of daily living and quality of life decreases (Bell et al., 2015; Russel, 2007; van Nie-Visser et al., 2015).

Currently, liquid nutritional supplements are used to combat malnutrition. However, studies have shown increasing access to a variety of foods and drinks treats malnutrition more effectively, demonstrating the potential benefits of snacking on foods (Simmons et al., 2010).

## PROJECT FINDINGS

This project evaluated the perspectives of nursing home residents on preferred qualities in snacks and the accessibility of snacks in their facility to gain a better understanding of how to utilize snacks as an intervention. Overall, residents reported that they did not have access to snacks that matches their needs, preferences, and expectations for accessibility and availability.

While snacking preferences remained highly individualized, there was an overall consensus that variety, nutritional value, convenience, appearance, and taste were important qualities in residents' preferred snacks.

Increased snacking options, individualization, and person-centered care may lead to an increase in nutritional intake and quality of life for nursing home residents. These considerations are especially important for individuals with dysphagia as they are at an increased risk of malnutrition (Bannerman & McDermott, 2011).

Residents identified personal factors like dysphagia and institutional factors including inadequate staffing as barriers to obtaining their preferred snacks.



