

What can OSCAR Dietitians do for your residents?

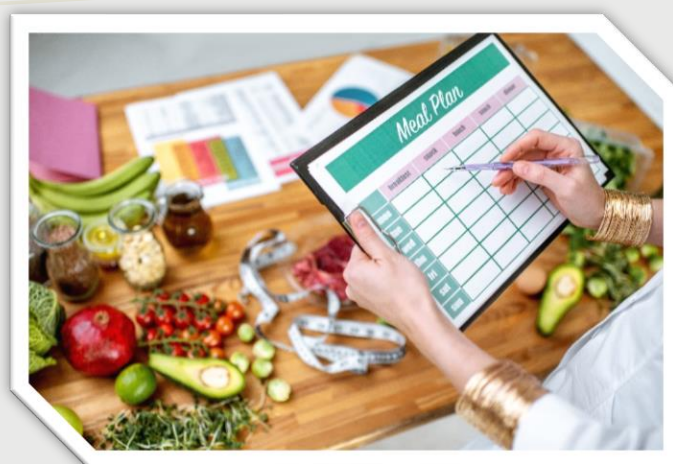
By Ella Monaghan, OSCAR Care Group Lead Dietitian

Oscar Care Group dietitians provide a range of services to ensure aged care residents are receiving adequate nutrition and hydration. There is a common misconception that dietitians are the 'food police'.

What do Dietitians do?

Dietitians are university qualified health professionals with a background in science who are trained to provide medical nutrition therapy in line with evidenced based practice to assist with a range of medical conditions including diabetes, heart disease, oncology, gastrointestinal diseases, allergies/intolerances and kidney disease.

As part of the dietetic qualifications, dietitians must complete placement in a range of sectors including food service, hospitals, community health and research. Therefore, dietitians tailor nutritional advice to best suit the workplace and needs of the patient/resident.



OSCAR Care Group Dietitians

Oscar Care Group's Dietetic department consists of a team of 16 highly qualified dietitians providing nutritional support to residential aged care facilities across Australia. The most common reason for referral is predominantly for weight loss and malnutrition as research indicates that between 22 – 50% residents are considered malnourished. (1)





How our Dietitians work

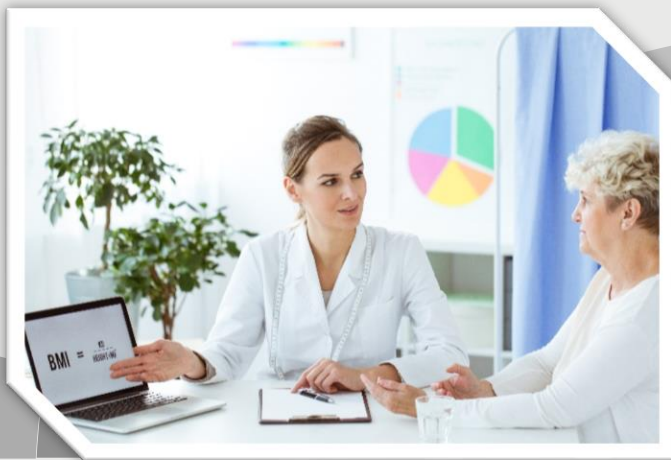
Dietitians work closely with both care staff and kitchen staff to ensure that the nutritional needs of the resident are met. Oscar Care Group dietitians utilise a 'food first approach' of food fortification and dietary modification prior to the use of oral nutritional supplements (unless clinically required).

When to make a Dietetic referral

Let's consider the following reasons when a dietetic referral would be beneficial;

- Greater than 2kg unintentional weight loss in 1 month OR more than 3kg in 3 months.
- A resident has wounds or pressure injuries.
- Poor appetite or reduced oral intake.
- Residents require nutritional support (e.g. oral supplements or PEG/NG feeding).
- Unstable weight.
- New residents.
- Residents experiencing nausea, vomiting, reflux, diarrhoea or constipation.
- Residents with allergies/intolerances.
- Behavioural issues which are impacting oral intake (e.g. refusing meals, wandering etc).
- Residents taking medications which is impacting on their oral intake or absorption of food.
- Residents with newly diagnosed diabetes or those with frequent low or unable blood sugars.

The dietitian conducting a nutritional assessment will assess a range of factors which may be impacting on a resident's oral intake such as; weight changes, illnesses/disease progression, evidence of infections or wounds, swallowing difficulties, nausea or vomiting and bowel habits. The dietitian will calculate how much the resident is eating in accordance with their nutritional requirements using food and fluid charts or discussing eating behaviours with the resident's friends, next of kin or care staff.

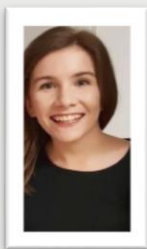


The Oscar Care Group's dietetic department offers a variety of services to ensure the nutritional needs of your residents are met including;

- Individual nutritional assessments
- Menu reviews
- Recipe analysis
- Supplement reviews and audits
- Malnutrition screening
- Healthy Weight Range reviews
- Nutrition and hydration education session for nursing, catering and care staff

References

- 1) Dietitians Association of Australia. Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. March 2019. https://daa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/DAA_Royal-Commission-Aged-Care_Mar-2019_Final.pdf



Need help with improving a resident's nutrition & hydration?

This article was written by OSCAR Hospitality Lead Dietitian, Ella Monaghan. Please call or email via our contact details below.

