

## **Mealtimes and healthy eating: How can friends and family members help?**

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**Here are some ways that friends and family members can help people with memory problems and their family care partners to enjoy mealtimes and eat well. These are real examples from the Eating Together study, although names have been changed.**

Colleen calls her mother every day at lunch time to give a friendly reminder that it's time to eat.

Fran hasn't been eating well and has lost a lot of weight. She eats better at restaurants when she is out with friends. Several of her friends individually take her out for lunch each week.

Flora has a hard time choosing items from the menu when she eats out. Her friends all know that she likes to eat seafood, and they point out a couple items on the menu with fish that she would enjoy.

Heidi sometimes has difficulty finding her way back to the table in a restaurant after going to the washroom. Her friend, Wendy, always goes along with her to the washroom when they and their husbands eat out together.

Ben hasn't done much cooking before, but his friend Richard really likes to cook. Richard suggested that they get together and make a big pot of soup. They went to a grocery store first and picked up all the things they needed and then went back to Ben's place. Richard helped Ben to make the soup by teaching him the steps and letting him do the work. They made a tasty soup, and later on Ben made it again by himself.

It's getting pretty hard for Mary to host a meal anymore for others, but she still likes to cook and be the hostess. Her daughters have started bringing the main parts of the meal when their families come to visit.

Karen's mom and dad live in a retirement home. They have a small kitchenette in their apartment with a microwave and an electric frying pan. Karen comes once a week and makes a home cooked meal there for them.

Cindy brings her aunt homemade meals that can be put in the freezer and heated up in the microwave. Often she gets the food ready at home and then cooks it at her aunt's house so that she gets to enjoy the good smells from the oven.

Ellen cares for her husband and normally does all the cooking, but she has been feeling sick. A friend brought her a big pot of healthy soup, salad, and a casserole.

Whenever Ed and Marlene visit Ed's sister, she always sends food home with them.

Jeremy picks up a grocery list from his mom each week and does all the grocery shopping for his parents.

Diane still likes to go out grocery shopping, but she needs some assistance. Her friend, Anna, takes her to the store and lets her shop alone for a while. She keeps an eye on how she is doing and comes to ask if she wants help if she begins to look confused.

Jenny's daughter came to visit and helped out by organizing the kitchen. She put all the things that Jenny needed most in places that were easy to find and reach.

Once in a while, Jane likes to go out with her girlfriends for supper, but it is hard to leave her husband, Sam, home alone. The husband of one of her friends comes over and has supper with Sam while their wives go out.