

# Talking<sub>Mats</sub>,

"I don't enjoy food like I used to"

The views of people with dementia about mealtimes

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#### **Background:**

Mealtimes fulfil 2 fundamental human needs

- nourishment
- interpersonal involvement

### Aim:

To gather information from the first-hand experience of 13 people with dementia about their mealtimes

## Findings from focus groups

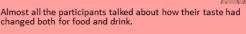
#### Mealtimes

For several people, their experience of mealtimes had changed since their diagnosis of dementia. Several said that they now skip breakfast and sometimes lunch

- Just went off it [breakfast]
- Sometimes I'll take it [breakfast] sometimes I don't – I try to have it
- I can take it or leave it



#### Changes in taste

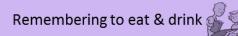


- Tastes have changed I used to eat potatoes and mince for breakfast, dinner and tea [laughs] ....but its not the same I can't describe exactly what it is, but it's the tongue. I can't clean it, I can't get rid of it
- It's just a bland taste
- ome families had overcome the problem of lack of taste by oing for more strongly flavoured food.

#### Where to eat

Some found it more difficult to eat out since their diagnosis for various reasons including noise, distractions and unfamiliarity.

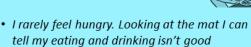
- I don't like eating out now. It's too noisy for me
- Too much distractions, televisions, too many people talking
- I have difficulty with strange knives , forks and spoons makes me slower and food gets cold and less tasty



Another key factor reported by most was the problem of forgetting to eat and drink

- I don't drink enough I keep forgetting
- I'm forever getting rows for not eating enough
- My husband leaves food out for me to make sure I eat it.





- Sometimes I don't eat for 3 days It doesnae bother me – I just don't feel hungry
- I just tend to consume the food rather than enjoy it.

## Things that might help

- reducing distractions like TV and noise when eating
- avoiding difficult food
- having more time
- getting involved in cooking with a partner
- adding additional flavour to food
- having food which looks attractive
- having smaller meals
- having medication in liquid form rather than as tablets
- being reminded by others to eat and drink going to familiar cafes or restaurants when eating out
- having own cutlery when eating out



For further information and full report please contact joan@talkingmats.com