Nutrition, Dignity, and Quality of Life

Findings from the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils' Province-wide Food Service Survey.



The Food Survey findings highlight the importance of targeted investments in both staffing and food funding to enhance resident experience, health, and overall well-being.

- Conducted from Sept. 2025 - Nov. 2025
- Nearly 1400 LTC resident participants from across all Ontario Health regions.

KEY FINDINGS

48%
reported dining assistance was not available when meals were served.



67%
agreed that the $13.44* per diem for nutritional support was **not enough** to provide quality meals.



81%
strongly support increased food service staffing, which would allow care staff to focus on assisting residents.

53%
called for more fresh and nutritious foods

45%
raised concerns about protein quality and quantity

33% were dissatisfied with the limited time available for staff to meaningfully interact with residents during meals.

Of these residents: 29%
identified staffing shortages as a barrier to staff-resident connection.

82%
agreed that a **larger food budget** would improve menu offerings and the overall dining experience.

OARC

Learn more: www.ontarc.com

*Nutritional allowance $13.71 as of April 2026



IMPLENTATION TIPS AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

Residents and their long-term care teams can work together to make improvements to the dining experience in the home.

COLLABORATING WITH YOUR RESIDENTS

- Meet proactively with residents through a designated food and pleasurable dining committee for ongoing feedback.
- Explain the legislative, regulatory, public health, IPAC, vendor and funding constraints that influence food service in LTC, and work with residents to identify creative and meaningful alternatives when preferred options are not feasible.
- Vendor showcases can be an opportunity to gather feedback from residents, family members and staff when exploring new suppliers. Gather feedback on taste and texture.

CO-DESIGN IN ACTION

Spotlighting Kensignton Health's Collaborative Quality Improvement Project

Residents' and Family Councils played a key role in selecting new dining tables. As part of the consultation process, table samples were sourced and displayed, allowing each Council to provide informed feedback.

Source: Seasons Magazine, Spring/Summer '26

PROACTIVELY SEEK RESIDENT FEEDBACK

In addition to discussions about meal and snack times and menu review, explore opportunities for residents to influence the physical environments they dine in. Ask residents about:

- tables, chairs, soft furnishings such as tableclothes, placemats, artwork, etc.
- room ambiance, including music preferences and table decor.

Remember this is the residents' home and these small details might help to stimulate appetites and improve food intake.

USING PERSON-CENTRED LANGUAGE

Residents are sensitive to words and labels you use, so it is important to embrace person-centered language in the dining rooms. Please call residents by name as opposed to their texture-type, or by their assistance level (ie: "She's a feeder.")

> We all had a say, it was great!
>
> Resident Leader, Virginia P. Kensington Health