

Dysphagia Friendly Cooking Series for caregivers of people with dementia associated dysphagia

M. Freilich¹, L. Sokoloff^{1,5}, M. Piccini^{1,5}, D. Bonfield², K. Amirhosseini³, G. Capone⁴

¹Baycrest, Toronto, ON, ²George Brown College, Toronto, ON, ³City of Toronto, Toronto, ON, ⁴Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, Toronto, ON, ⁵University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

Introduction: Dysphagia is common in people with cognitive impairment, sometimes resulting in malnutrition, dehydration, pneumonia, choking, hospitalization and/or death. Safe foods are often bland and unappetizing; caregivers are not properly taught how to prepare safe foods that are appetizing and nutritious. Literature indicates that short cooking programs can increase confidence in performance, food literacy and knowledge for creating healthier meals. Combining education with demonstration is recommended. We ran a series of dysphagia friendly cooking classes that included dysphagia education, related nutritional issues and the IDDSI framework. We shared validated recipes previously developed by our team and tested in a research kitchen.

Objectives: Caregivers participating in dysphagia cooking classes will: 1) increase knowledge about dementia, dysphagia and IDDSI; and, 2) increase confidence and skills for preparing modified textures

Methods: Qualitative study with REB approval from Baycrest. Participants attended 4 cooking classes showcasing cooking videos of validated dysphagia friendly recipes. Participants tasted the foods and discussed textures. Live education was provided regarding dysphagia and enhancing dining experiences. IDDSI standards were reviewed and highlighted for easier recipe reproduction and so other appropriate foods could be prepared confidently at home.

Evaluation: Knowledge and confidence surveys administered pre-, post- and 7 weeks post classes. Each subject was their own control. Results Positive trends were noted for increased confidence in preparing food and liquids and knowledge of the IDDSI framework.

Conclusions: A cooking series pairing filmed validated dysphagia friendly recipes with live education and tasting can increase knowledge and confidence of caregivers.

Significance to Dietetics: Increases accuracy and comprehension for safe food/liquid preparation by providing knowledge and confidence to prepare safe, healthy and appropriate meals, prevent unplanned weight loss and promote home cooking for people with dysphagia Assists design of nutritional therapy to address dysphagia and related nutritional complications Increases public awareness about IDDSI.

Funded by: Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation