



Quick Service Menus

In these challenging times it's hard to predict what might happen in our facilities. Being prepared includes considering how to continue to provide meals to residents when your skilled cooks and dietary staff may not be available. In an all hands-on deck situation, administrators, activities staff or other facility members may be called upon to help prepare and serve meals. A quick service menu can help.

What is a quick service menu?

A quick service menu is a step between your typical menu and an emergency menu. It is designed to take less time and skill to prepare utilizing frozen, heat and serve items and those which are easy to prepare. The main difference between an emergency menu and quick service menu is the quick service menu assumes utilities such as water and electric or gas are still available.

Quick Service Menu Tips

- 1) **Purchase heat and serve entrees to be stored in the freezer** - Your food vendor has many heat and serve items such as lasagna, omelets and other casseroles. These can be purchased ahead and prepared with very little labor and cooking skill.
- 2) **Buy molded puree products** - A variety of pureed food items are available to purchase frozen. Food selections include entire meals, bread, meat, fruit or vegetable options. These are typically pre-portioned to heat and serve.
- 3) **Prepare and freeze foods ahead of time** - Your cooks can prepare and freeze foods ahead of time. Place these items in 2-inch pans and freeze for later use. Regular, mechanical soft and pureed texture items can all be prepared ahead and frozen.
- 4) **Consider liberalizing therapeutic diets** – In a time when serving a meal is extremely challenging, your physicians may agree that most residents will be able to tolerate less restrictive diets. This will make serving meals easier for staff with limited knowledge of therapeutic diets.
- 5) **Purchase pre-thickened liquids** - Utilizing pre-thickened liquids will ensure residents are given the appropriate consistency and will reduce staff time and knowledge needed to prepare thickened liquids.
- 6) **Utilize “naturally” pureed or mechanical soft items** - Items such as mashed potatoes, cream of wheat and pudding for purees and meatloaf, mac and cheese and lunchmeat salads for mechanical soft will not need to be altered to promote safe resident intakes.



7) **Consider feeding your facility staff** - Your facility staff will be working under stress and are likely putting in extra hours to help care for your residents. Offering meals to your staff is one way to help make them feel appreciated and make sure they are eating well during these challenging times. If your dining services department is well staffed, grab and go meal options staff can take home to their families would be a way to show your appreciation for their dedication to your residents.

8) **Train ahead** - Selecting a few staff members outside the dining services department to train and familiarize with the menu and safe food handling practices will help your facility be prepared if your dining services department is impacted by illness or extreme staffing shortages.