

# FOOD BUDDIES

*TIPS FOR YOU & YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURS DURING  
TIMES WHEN WE CAN'T GET OUT MUCH*

*April 2020*



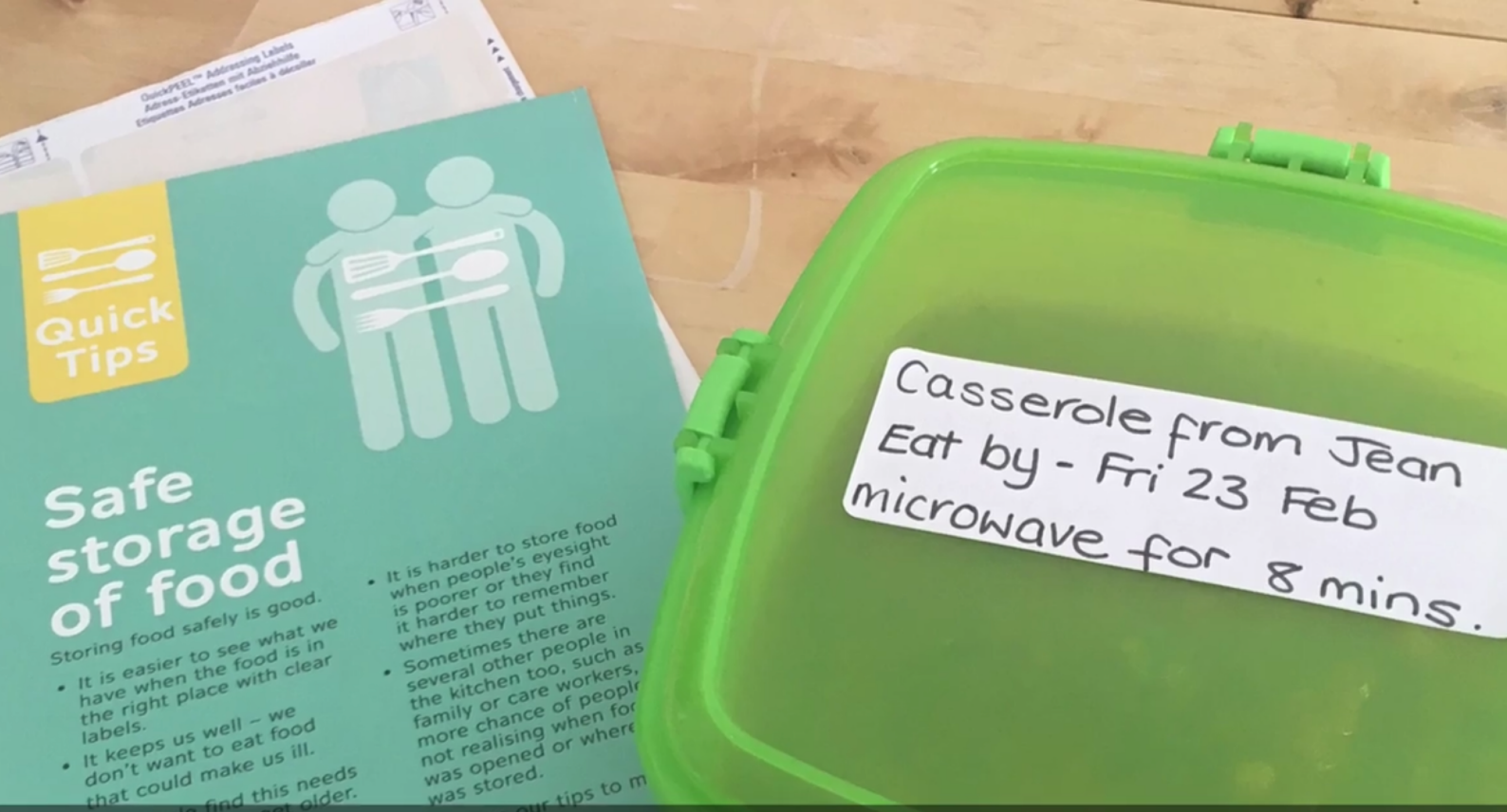


**Food Buddies develops practical help for older people, people living with dementia and other people who sometimes have problems around food. We are trying to make life easier for people, staying safe and continuing to shop, cook and enjoy food.**

**It is lovely that during challenging times we are seeing communities come together to help each other in many ways including to share food with neighbours and others in the community.**

**This guide has been brought together with older people and their families and friends who are sharing their experiences to help other people.**

**We would like to thank everyone who has helped us develop these tips.**



## Handing in/cooking food to neighbours

It can be hard for those living with dementia to remember that you gave them something or what they are supposed to do with it. It would be helpful if you:

- Put the day and date that it needs to be eaten by on it (you could also use a picture/part of the packaging of ingredients)
- How to store it
- How to heat it up
- Your name & phone number so they can phone you if they aren't sure what to do
- Ingredients (ideally check with them or a family member in case they have allergies or intolerances)
- Plastic storage containers with plastic flaps that fold and click down on each side can be easier to open if people are struggling to grip
- Try not to overload a plate with too much food, some people find having just one or 2 foods on a plate at a time helps.
- Having meals with colourful food and different textures can encourage people to eat.
- A knob of butter or dash of olive oil will make hot food look glossy and more appealing
- If food goes cold it will lose its appeal, consider serving half portions to keep the food warm

## Smaller or reduced appetite

As we get older our appetite can reduce so you want to get a good amount of energy and protein from a small amount of food. It can help to:

- Include high calorie foods such as full fat milk, butter or nuts
- Have several small meals or snacks throughout the day, avoiding too much salt or sugar – something tasty like spiced roasted chick peas
- Try drinks like smoothies as they can have good food content too (add peanut butter, yoghurt, oats or nuts if making your own)
- Foods high in natural fats also work well like:
  - Nuts & olives
  - Cheese
  - Avocado
  - Peanut butter & chocolate spread
  - Soups with beans or lentils
  - Milky drinks like milkshakes or hot chocolate
- As we are staying at home more and not getting out to get as much exercise as we would usually do, we may have a smaller appetite so feel like smaller portions.

## Sense of taste & smell

As we get older our senses become less acute, many health problems such as having a cold or a chest infection will affect our sense of smell too as can dementia, meaning food may not taste or smell the same as a person is used to.

- Don't worry about foods not tasting the same. See it as an opportunity to try new foods
- Try adding herbs & spices to the food to give it a stronger taste. Even Worcestershire sauce can add a delicious 'kick' to bland food
- Lemon juice can be used to season food, the acid boosts and balances other flavours.
- Make meals colourful as we eat with our eyes too.
- If all you want is sweet foods try adding small amounts of honey or sugar to savoury food. You could also add sweet chutney or even jam!
- Fruit and naturally sweet vegetables such as carrots or sweet potato are a healthier option.





## Shopping

**Getting to the shops or getting the foods you are used to cooking can be a challenge during the pandemic, why not have some fun:**

- Experiment with flavour combinations
- Try new ways of cooking foods
- Think of alternatives, they didn't have any pasta for my bolognese but they had loads of potatoes - what could I do instead?
- Invent your own recipes, you never know, you may find your new favourite thing!
- Encourage people to drink too - a coloured glass is easier to see and remember about

If you do manage to shop - or send someone else:  
Stock up with tins and packets that have a long shelf life such as: cooked beans, coconut milk, yoghurts and dried fruits

## Don't fancy cooking?

**We all have days when we don't fancy cooking; preparing in advance for these days can make life easier:**

- Try to have a few back-up ready meals or leftovers in the freezer that can be easily defrosted and heated up
- Think about how you can add to easy food so it has enough goodness to be a meal, e.g. adding bacon and cream to a tin of pea soup, adding a small can of sweetcorn, half a stock cube, and milk to condensed chicken soup will make corn chowder.
- Grazing platters work well too for people who are not sure what they fancy/enjoy. Try small amounts of different foods like:
  - Fruits - dried or fresh
  - Breads, crackers and oatcakes
  - Vegetable sticks
  - Dips & spreads
  - Different temperatures - hot and cold
  - Different textures - smooth and crunchy
  - Different tastes - spicy, sweet, salty, sour and bitter
- Eating and cooking with a friend or family member is a great way to help boost appetite and make meal times more enjoyable. Although this isn't possible at the moment perhaps arranging to cook the same meal together and eat together via skype/facetime could be an option?

**These tips and all the Food Buddies resources can be downloaded at <https://otbds.org/projects/food-buddies/>**

**Outside the Box, 3.10 The Whisky Bond, 2 Dawson Road, Glasgow, G4 9SS**

**T. 0141 419 0451**

**admin@otbds.org**

**www.otbds.org**