

# eBites

Spring 2019

Published by Vegetarian for Life, the advocacy and educational charity working on behalf of older vegetarians and vegans

## Inspirational vegans

The energetic pensioner taking on the enormous challenge of 1 million push-ups



### [Getting to grips with dysphagia](#)

Industry experts reveal their top tips on caring for someone with swallowing difficulties

**PLUS:** [Catering for special diets made easy in brand new guide](#)



# Welcome

Welcome to the Spring issue of Vegetarian for Life eBites. This issue is jam-packed with tips and advice from industry professionals, as well as championing inspirational older vegans and vegetarians.

We recently surveyed 1,000 care homes to find out how many residents are vegan or vegetarian. Since the survey was last commissioned in 2014, the number of vegans in residential care has increased by a whopping 167%!

Many of us genuinely fear being fed meat should we lose capacity. Being vegan or vegetarian is often central to our identity, and may be the strongest belief that we hold. It might be something that we have committed to for many years – even decades.

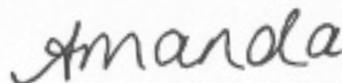
So we're excited to announce the launch of a new guide and training programme. Dietary Diversity in the Care Sector covers the law as it relates to special diets, and outlines best practice in ethical dilemmas – including when a vegetarian asks for meat. For recipes and more information, [see page 3](#).

This issue also looks in detail at dysphagia. We have spoken with dysphagia specialist, Preston Walker, to bring you a comprehensive guide to caring for someone with difficulty swallowing. Read the full interview on [pages 4 and 5](#).

Finally, we wanted to share some insight into the work of our roving chef team. On [page 8](#) we report on a recent vegan food tasting event held at a care home. Training such as this is fully funded, and a great way to gain some inspiration in preparing plant-based options.

Wishing you a very happy National Vegetarian Week!

Amanda Woodvine, Editor



Vegetarian for Life is an advocacy and educational charity working on behalf of older vegetarians and vegans throughout the UK.



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Be inspired by these incredible older vegans and vegetarians

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Learn how to prepare easy vegan and vegetarian meals from our expert chefs

## Reader exclusive

One of the most popular vegan chocolate brands, Vego, is kindly offering five readers a selection of its most sought-after products, including the newly launched white chocolate and almond bar. The Vegobar is vegan, organic, fairtrade and gluten-free and is created using ingredients such as fine Italian hazelnut paste, hazelnut cocoa cream and whole hazelnuts that are blended to create its much-loved taste.

Each winner will receive 1 pack of Vegolino Fine Nougat Pralines, 1

Hazelnut Chocolate Spread, 1 Vego 150g bar, 1 Vego 65g bar, and 1 Vego White Almond Bliss.

For your chance to win, answer this question: What nut is used in the newest addition to the Vegobar range?

A) Almond B) Walnut C) Cashew

Email [info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk](mailto:info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk) with your answer by midday on 01/06/1019.

Terms and conditions: To view the Vego range and for all enquiries visit <http://vego-chocolate.com>. Five winners will be drawn at random from all entries received. One entry per household only. UK addresses only. There is no cash alternative.

WIN!





To book any of our training, please contact Ellie Murphy, Cookery & Training Outreach Coordinator, on 0161 257 0887 or [ellie@vegetarianforlife.org.uk](mailto:ellie@vegetarianforlife.org.uk)

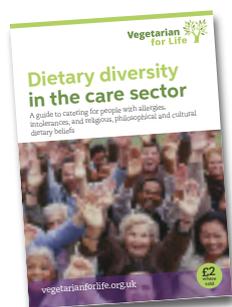
# Dietary Diversity in the Care Sector

This month sees the launch of Dietary Diversity in the Care Sector, our exciting new guide and training programme. These resources are designed to make it easier to cater for any service users who require a 'free-from' or 'special' diet. Through the guide and half-day training, we introduce the various reasons that people may need, or want, to exclude certain foods from their diet. And at the back of the guide is a collection of recipes suitable for a variety of these dietary requirements.

There are many reasons why people may exclude foods from their diet. These include allergies, intolerances, autoimmune diseases, personal beliefs, and religious and philosophical beliefs.

Catering for service users' dietary requirements is an important aspect of honouring equality and diversity within a care establishment. Service users are individual people, with diverse needs. True person-centred care means offering equal access to the services that you provide – whether that is appealing vegan food at a summer barbecue, or a slice of gluten-free cake as part of a birthday celebration.

Here is a simple recipe that is great for a snack, and just one of many recipes featured in the guide.



Visit [vegetarianforlife.org.uk/resources/publications](http://vegetarianforlife.org.uk/resources/publications) to download a copy of the guide.

## Fruity tea loaf

MAKES 10 SLICES

 Can be gluten-free

- 150ml tea – black tea, or your favourite herbal tea
- 150g unsulphured dried prunes, chopped to the size of the raisins
- 75g unsulphured dried dates, chopped to the size of the raisins
- 75g unsulphured dried apricots, chopped to the size of the raisins
- 75g unsulphured raisins
- 1 tsp gluten-free baking powder
- 125ml dairy-free milk
- 110g vegetable oil
- 1 banana – ripe works best here
- 350g self-raising flour   gluten-free if required) OR spelt flour  with gluten-free baking powder according to packet instructions
- 2 tbsp orange marmalade, or any variety. Ginger would also work well

**1** Preheat the oven to 160°C fan/180°C/gas mark 4. Line and grease a 2lb or 900g loaf tin.

**2** Add the pre-prepared tea to a saucepan with the dried fruits and bring to a low simmer. Simmer for 1 minute, then turn of the heat and add the teaspoon of baking powder. It will fizz as you stir it in.

**3** Blend the banana, dairy-free milk and oil together, and add to the pan. Stir in the flour and marmalade.

**4** Pour into the tin, and bake for 50 minutes, or until a skewer comes out clean.

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[purefamilyfood.com](http://purefamilyfood.com)

# The A to Z of dysphagia



A standardised framework recently came into place internationally for those caring for someone with dysphagia. The guidelines – created by the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative – show thickness levels of food and drink for a person with dysphagia. This is to

encourage standardisation around the world.

At Vegetarian for Life we have spoken to experts to understand the condition and learn the best way to care for someone with dysphagia. We have specifically focused on older vegans or vegetarians.

As part of our campaign around this, we spoke to Preston Walker, an expert in preparing dysphagic foods and an award-winning chef with 25 years' experience.

Preston has dedicated his career to improving the standard of cooking across the care catering sector with expertise in special diets and nutrition for older adults.

He now provides training and guidance to individuals and professional organisations about the best ways to cater for those living with dysphagia.

Oak House Kitchen, a catering consultancy business that is co-owned by Preston, is offering three online courses around the new IDDSI framework relating to dysphagia.

So as part of our campaign at Vegetarian for Life, we asked Preston about dysphagia and his tips on catering for someone living with dysphagia.

## Q WHAT IS DYSPHAGIA?

A Dysphagia is the medical term for swallowing difficulties. It is the inability to swallow normally or freely, stopping the safe passage of food or drink to the stomach.

Dysphagia is not a disease in itself but a condition of many disorders. Dysphagia can be a short or life-long problem.

## Q HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

A A speech and language therapist will diagnose dysphagia by assessing the swallow function of an individual, and provide guidance on appropriate foods, drinks or strategies to maintain safety.

## Q HOW DOES IT AFFECT PEOPLE?

A Dysphagia can have a physical and emotional impact on an individual. Mealtimes can be a tiring process and a person may be anxious of choking or aspirating. (When food or drink enters the airway.)

People may also feel a loss of dignity or embarrassment around eating modified food and/or thickened fluids.

The consequences of dysphagia are...

- Reduced nutritional intake leading to malnutrition and dehydration
- Chest infections
- Aspiration pneumonia
- Death



Copyright: The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative 2016  
@ <https://iddsi.org/framework/>

### Q WHO IS LIKELY TO HAVE DYSPHAGIA?

A Dysphagia can affect anyone at any stage of life. Some of the most common conditions that can lead to dysphagia are:

Neurological injuries

- Trauma causing brain injury
- Stroke

Progressive neurological conditions

- Dementia
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Motor neurone disease

Mechanical or obstructive conditions

- Head and neck cancer
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Other conditions

- Learning disabilities
- Deconditioning with age

### Q WHAT CAN SOMEONE DO IF THEY SUSPECT A PERSON THEY CARE FOR AND/OR A LOVED ONE HAS DYSPHAGIA?

A There are many indicators that someone may be experiencing problems with swallowing; some more obvious than others. If you suspect a person has dysphagia you should request a swallow assessment by speaking to a doctor or speech and language therapist as soon as possible. Documenting information about mealtimes will help with diagnosis such as:

- Any food/drink that is avoided or challenging?
- Feelings or experiences during mealtimes
- Time it takes to eat meals – more or less than usual?
- Are all mealtimes throughout the day the same – are any more or less successful?
- Monitor weight – gain/loss?

### Q HOW IS DYSPHAGIA MANAGED?

A Treatment will involve input from a doctor to treat the underlying cause of dysphagia and a speech and language therapist who will prescribe food and drink modifications, provide therapy regimens to help recovery and advise on swallow safety.

### Q WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CONSISTENCIES OF FOOD AND DRINK?

A The IDDSI framework categorises food and drink in levels ranging from thin liquids through to regular foods.

Depending on the type of dysphagia and the ability of an individual, food and drink modifications may be required to minimise risk of harm.

Some people may benefit from thicker liquids, which slows the flow rate down and allows an individual more

time to prepare the swallow.

Food modifications can range from restricting the particle size of food and ensuring tenderness through to pureed and liquidised solutions.

More information about the IDDSI framework can be found on their website.

### Q WHAT ARE THE BEST FOODS TO MAKE WITH FOR SOMEONE WITH DYSPHAGIA?

A It is best to prepare meals that that will be enjoyed so discuss what foods the person likes to eat. They may not feel like eating or be anxious at meal times so you will have more success if it's a favourite dish.

### Q ARE THERE ANY FOODS THAT CAN'T BE ADAPTED FOR DYSPHAGIA?

A I've not found anything that can't be modified in some way. Some foods are more challenging across different IDDSI levels, which requires a little thinking outside the box! Many people are surprised salads can be modified effectively.

### Q ARE THERE ANY TIPS FOR CREATING VEGAN/VEGETARIAN DISHES FOR SOMEONE WITH DYSPHAGIA?

A Because people with dysphagia are at a higher risk of malnutrition, fortify foods with high protein/calorie ingredients.

Be mindful that the taste of modified food, particularly pureed or liquidised consistencies, can be affected during processing. Thickening and blending foods can mean they taste blander, which is less likely to meet expectations.

Seasoning is essential for food to taste good, and use spices or herbs to give food a flavour boost. If liquid needs to be added when blending food make sure it is calorie dense and compliments the flavour profile of the dish. Ensure colours are vibrant and food is presented appealingly to stimulate appetite.

### Q WHAT CAN CARE HOMES DO TO HELP MAKE FOOD INTERESTING AND EXCITING FOR SOMEONE WITH DYSPHAGIA?

A Maintaining the variety of food on offer is essential for enjoyment and pleasure. The perfect

solution is to offer the daily menu options prepared to the appropriate consistency. This way an individual can eat the same as other residents and maintain a balanced diet with a mixture of food groups.

Planning is key; some ingredients will need cooking for a longer period or require advanced blending, so build this into your working day.

Introduce different strategies and support at mealtimes. If someone fatigues during mealtimes try offering five smaller meals instead of three larger ones throughout the day.

For more information about the training courses visit the [Oak House Kitchen](#) website.

Vegetarian for Life has created a video library full of tips and advice to help you care for an older vegan or vegetarian person living with dysphagia.

There are recipes, tips for vegan and vegetarian food fortification, as well as the basics of how to spot the signs if you think a person has dysphagia.

To view the dysphagia video library, [click here](#).

# Reader stories

There are some incredible and inspirational older vegetarians and vegans out there so at Vegetarian for Life we wanted to celebrate their achievements. In the first edition of our Friends' Corner let us introduce Paul Youd and Judy Ward. They both have incredible stories.

## Paul Youd

Meet the incredible 81-year-old vegan whose mission is to complete ONE MILLION press-ups.

After raising money for charity by successfully completing 1,000 press-ups in an hour Paul Youd now has his sights set on a staggering one million press ups spread out over 10 years – which is more than 274 a day – all to show what is possible on a vegan diet.

He said: "A few years ago I raised around £850 for charity for completing 1,000 press-ups in an hour. I used to think that people had a set exercise routine and they stuck to it and that was that. But I wanted to push myself even further and do 3,000 press ups a week. Last night it took me 39 minutes to do 1,000 so I have done a fair amount this week."

He has so far already clocked up 170,000 press-ups after starting the challenge on his 80th birthday in September 2017.

He added: "I'm going to do it. I am determined."

Since going vegan 15 years ago, Paul describes his energy as 'unlimited' and he does kettlebell routines as well as weekly chin-ups.

Paul said: "I dance across the room in the morning to open the curtains and skip down the path when I leave the house. I have so much energy. I feel so good, I feel like a 40-year-old. I want to show people the health benefits of a vegan lifestyle because it's never too late to go vegan."

The spritely grandfather of four (soon-to-be five) is on no medication and said he hasn't needed to see a doctor in 5 years.

He added: "I used to have really painful arthritis in my fingers. All I would get from the doctor was ibuprofen. It would hurt to lift a kettle or even just pull the duvet up in bed. But since going vegan the pain has gone. I feel so happy and energetic."

Paul, from Taunton, Somerset, said it took him a few years to fully make the switch to a vegan lifestyle after the outbreak of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

He said: "I had never really taken an interest in meat, where it was coming from and animals' welfare but that seemed to spark it off. I then started looking into the egg and dairy industry and realised just how cruel it was and just knew I couldn't be part of it any more. It took around 2 years for the blinkers to come off, then I

went vegan."

His wife, Teresa, 70, eats mainly plant-based at home but his two adult children aren't vegan.

Paul, a retired civil servant, now teaches bread-making to adults with learning disabilities and also to those using

foodbanks to help food go a little further.

He added: "I've always been the one to stand out in the family so they just accept it."

"Although because I'm going to be out every weekend with the animal rights activists, I have promised to do more around the house. It's only fair."

Mr Youd is also aiming to continue taking part in weekly 'Cube of Truth' events. These are sessions in busy areas where people anonymously stand together and share footage from dairy farms, egg factories and slaughter houses.

He said: "The response we get at these events is so positive, people just don't really know what is going on. I think everyone is vegan at heart because no-one wants to see an animal suffering or in pain. So this is a way to align people's actions with their morals."

Speaking about the rise in veganism he said it's 'incredible'.

He added: "When I went vegan it wasn't really the done thing, I remember eating out was a lot more tricky than it is today. But to see the increase of veganism is fantastic. It's going to grow exponentially. I want to be part of that and help educate and inspire others to see the benefits."



# Judy Ward

Facebook videos showing inside slaughter houses were what finally made a 77-year-old farmer's granddaughter go vegan – and she is now encouraging others to give it a try.

Judy Ward, from Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, spent her childhood on a farm learning how to pluck and dress chickens.

But after 7 decades it was a video on Facebook that made the pensioner turn plant-based.

Judy said: "I remember as a child being on the farm and there being around 1,000 chickens in brick sheds and I never once looked at them as a commodity.

"I also remember seeing calves being taken away from their mothers at birth. I would be the one who took the powered milk to the calf. It was just a way of life.

"But I remember hearing the cows bellowing for their calves. It was heart-breaking really looking back at it but we just got on with it."

She also added she would feed pigs one day and the next they would be hung up in the kitchen.

Judy added: "I did question it most of my life but continued to eat meat and dairy. But it was one afternoon when I was 70, I was on Facebook and came across a video inside a slaughterhouse. I mean I had grown up with it but I had always been sheltered away from that side of it."



Vegetarian for Life Chief Executive, Amanda Woodvine, said: "It's fantastic to see Paul and Judy thriving and hearing their incredible stories. They are an inspiration to many. Their dedication to veganism is commendable.

"Judy makes the great point about how accessible vegan foods are now so here's to another year of growth for veganism. For anyone who is older and is wanting to try veganism, we offer a range of recipes on our website, or by post." Visit [vegetarianforlife.org.uk](http://vegetarianforlife.org.uk) or call 0161 257 0887 for more information.

She then decided to go vegan.

Judy added: "My mother actually went vegetarian when she was also around 70 but I thought it was just a phase and she was attention seeking. It's actually sad when you look back at how I used to think about it all.

"But when she died I guess I picked up the mantle she dropped."

Judy now also gives talks to school children as a speaker for Animal Aid.

She added: "What changed most for me was that I came to the understanding that we are sharing the planet with animals rather than having a priority on it. We take animals for granted and once you realise you can live healthily and happily without the need to cause suffering to another being, it's fantastic. If you can live without cruelty, why wouldn't you?"

Her two children support her veganism and her daughter uses many vegan products.

Judy said: "In this past year it's incredible the products that are coming to supermarkets. It's a very exciting time for veganism and I would recommend it to people of all ages.

"I know some people think that an older person doesn't use Facebook and that veganism is a younger thing to do but I'm proof that it's not. I am still really active and I'm not on any prescribed medication. I feel great. If I can do it, the granddaughter of a farmer, then anyone can."

If you know any older vegetarians and vegans who deserve some recognition, please send details and a photograph (with their permission), to [katie@vegetarianforlife.org.uk](mailto:katie@vegetarianforlife.org.uk)



# Vegan taste tasting at Midlands care home

Creamy mushrooms, scrambled tofu and a banana-peanut butter smoothie were some of the vegan foods offered to residents in a care home earlier this year – all created by Vegetarian for Life's roving chef, Maggie Lister.

Residents at Gracewell of Sutton Coldfield were able to taste test the plant-based foods as a way to introduce some new ingredients they might not have tried before.

Tofu and vegan cream cheese were given to the group to look at, touch and smell before being included in the final dishes.

One of the residents said she had never thought about a vegan diet before but it had 'opened her eyes' to plant-based cooking and she was keen to try more dishes in the future.

Head chef at the care home, Phil Jay, said that he really enjoyed the event, and also shared his award-winning vegan chocolate cakes that are suitable for those on a dysphagic diet.

He said: "It was fantastic, and it was nice for the residents to see and be able to try more vegan options.

"I think it's about changing perceptions of what vegan food tastes like. It was a really positive day."

Maggie said the event was a great success and is looking forward to more taster sessions in the future.

She said: "It's always a pleasure to meet with the team at Gracewell of Sutton Coldfield, a care home that prides itself in providing quality care for all residents.

"I had the chance to showcase a selection of vegan and vegetarian products with a group of residents for an afternoon tasting demo. The demo was not only a fun activity but also a chance to discuss favourite foods, and for residents to ask questions about plant-based diets. The fortified smoothie came out on top, followed by creamed mushrooms and then scrambled tofu; a range of food that is easy to make, tasty and nutritionally beneficial.

"Earlier in the day head chef at the care home, Phil Jay, took the time to show me how he creates his award-winning vegan dessert, which is suitable for residents on dysphagic diets; a very calorie dense meal that was beautifully presented and tasted great. Jody Sedgwick, the homes admissions advisor thanked us both for taking the trip. As a long-standing vegetarian herself she was excited to have us visit the home to discuss how they work with residents on vegetarian and vegan diets."



For more information or to book any of our training please contact Ellie Murphy, Cookery & Training Outreach Coordinator on 0161 257 0887 or [ellie@vegetarianforlife.org.uk](mailto:ellie@vegetarianforlife.org.uk)