

# MenuSource™

SPRING 2007

Count On Us... For Mealtime Possibilities

*“Behold, my friend, the spring is coming!”*

*Sitting Bull 1831-1890*



*There's something about those soft spring breezes and that very first crocus that absolutely energizes the human spirit...filling us with hope and excitement. Let's ring in this spring with joy—and a renewed dedication to creating a pleasurable dining experience for all.*

## Pleasing the aging palate

*Chemosensory decline is a natural part of aging and can adversely affect nutrient status by reducing eating enjoyment. We can offset this decline by using a variety of techniques that enhance food's palatability, says a prominent American nutritionist.*

It is a fact well known by those who work with the elderly that diet quality declines with age. Despite tremendous efforts at reversing this trend, a 2002 study found that 37% of institutionalized elderly people are malnourished.<sup>1</sup>

**Food and Nutrition Consultant and Educator Jacqueline B. Marcus, MS, RD, LD, CNS, FADA,** acknowledges that a wide range of factors affect nutrition in the elderly, including dentition, illness and social isolation. Jacqueline maintains that, “Chemosensory disorders—the decreased ability to taste and smell—are likely the root cause of malnutrition in the aging.” She takes it one step further. “Chemosensory disorders may also increase the incidence and progression of age-related disease.”

“Now's the time to act,” Jacqueline urges. By 2026, the number of Canadians 65 or older is expected to reach 8 million, double the amount in 2000. The fastest growing age group is comprised of those aged 80+. This cohort is projected to more than double in the same time frame.<sup>2</sup> “This is a golden opportunity for all those in the field of healthcare food service to better understand the ‘greying’ of our tastes.”

### Coming to our senses

True taste occurs throughout the entire oral area. Taste receptors called taste buds—located on papillae on the tongue, voice box, larynx and esophagus—and olfactory receptors in the nose work together to provide a taste experience. “You know how elderly people complain that food *just doesn't taste as good as it*

*used to?*” Jacqueline asks. “They're right—it probably doesn't. As we age we gradually lose our ability to fully taste and smell our food.”

**Humans are born with 10,000 taste buds.** Young adults have about 250 taste buds per papilla. “Our taste buds begin to decrease in number during middle age until, by our mid-70s, we have fewer than 100 taste buds per papilla.”

As taste buds dwindle, so does our olfactory ability, or ability to smell. “One-quarter of people between ages 65 and 79, and more than 80% of those 80 or older, have lost most of their sense of smell. Sweet and fruity odours are more sensitive to physiological changes. Musky and spicy odours are relatively stable.”

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## In This Issue...

- Dining well...it's a matter of taste
- Check in with Campbell's® Eating Smart® soups
- Susan Owens joins the team!

Natural deterioration is often exacerbated by medications and illness—Alzheimer’s disease is also a common culprit. Making the most of fond food memories might help.

**We can please the aging palate, not just appease it.**

There is hope. “Compensating for declining taste and smell is well within reach of dietary managers and staff,” says Jacqueline. “By increasing their knowledge of ingredients and techniques that boost flavour and sensory enjoyment, they can help many residents and patients rediscover the pleasure of eating—pleasure that may have been lost over time.”

**Jacqueline’s Motto...**

**No food is nutritious unless it is consumed. No food is nutritious unless it tastes good. Here are a few suggestions...**

- **Make use of umami.** “Umami is our fifth basic taste sensation—along with sweet, sour, salty and bitter. This vaguely mushroom-like, savoury taste activates receptors in the brain and stomach and helps us enjoy our food more. It can also reduce the level of salt required for a food to taste ‘good’.” Umami is found in foods that are naturally high in glutamate, such as mushrooms, tomato juice, tangy cheeses like Parmesan and roquefort and flavour enhancers like soy sauce. Easy ways to add umami to a meal include grating Parmesan over a salad and incorporating dried mushrooms into a meat loaf recipe.



- **Increase seasonings by as much as 2-1/2 times the amount called for in a recipe.** “Remember that a recipe may taste too seasoned to a care provider or relative but may taste just right to aging taste buds.”
- **Flavour extracts can stimulate taste buds and smell receptors** by heightening tastes and aromas. Add vanilla, mint or almond

extract to fruit salads, baked goods and sauces. Vegetable, poultry or meat extracts intensify flavours in soups and main courses.

- **Strongly flavoured foods and ingredients** such as garlic, onions and sun-dried tomatoes impart a lot of flavour if tolerated by aging digestive systems.
- **A spoonful of sugar** makes the vegetables go down! One long-term care facility reports consumption doubled with two teaspoons of sugar per vegetable serving.
- **Try a touch of fat** on broccoli, cauliflower or Brussels sprouts. The aging mouth’s ability to feel the fattiness of food also declines. A drizzle of creamy dressing, a sprinkle of bacon bits or chopped nuts may encourage consumption.
- **Make bitter better.** Acidic vinegars and vinaigrettes enhance taste. A squirt of citrus juice may balance flavour in bitter vegetables.
- **Neither too hot nor too cold.** Temperature extremes lessen flavour.

**Example of a flavour-enhanced meal day**

**Breakfast**

- Oatmeal with maple syrup flavour

**Lunch**

- Pork chops enhanced with concentrated fruit sauces, such as apricot
- Baked potato with bacon bits and sweet butter
- Red cabbage with a sprinkling of sugar
- Frozen yogurt, peaches in wine sauce

**Dinner**

- Minestrone soup (contains natural glutamate)
- Beef tomato macaroni (contains natural glutamate)
- Three-bean salad with balsamic vinegar and oil dressing
- Bananas and mandarin oranges with vanilla or almond extract

**Small changes make a big difference**

Flavour-enhancing techniques can be applied one at a time in a typical menu cycle. “The ideas are simple but they can boost appetite and palatability when taste and smell wane, and food loses its appeal,” Jacqueline says.

**Campbell and the aging palate**

Jacqueline notes that Campbell’s healthcare food products have been well designed for elderly diners and could work well in an enhanced menu. “The colours and aromas are rich and vivid, and the seasonings are very appropriate.”

**Better tastes...better nutrition ahead**

“There’s a growing body of information related to chemosensory aspects of aging. This information may hold the key to improving nutrition among the elderly. My advice to healthcare food service departments is to keep in mind that there’s a world of tastes and smells just waiting to be explored. Add some life to your dishes...and dish up new life to your menus!”

*For more information, contact Jacqueline at [fitfoodpro@aol.com](mailto:fitfoodpro@aol.com)*



Jacqueline is the President/Owner of Jacqueline B. Marcus and Associates in Northfield, Illinois and Associate Professor and Department Chair of Culinary Nutrition at Kendall College in Chicago, USA.

Related Articles by Jacqueline B. Marcus...  
Prime Time Strategies for Pleasing the Aging Palate (Dietary Manager Magazine, June 2005) and Culinary Applications of Umami (FoodTechnology, May 2005, Vol. 59, No. 5)

References  
<sup>1</sup> Guigoz Y, Lauque S and Vella BJ. Identifying the elderly at risk for malnutrition. The Mini Nutritional Assessment. Clin Geriatr Med, 2002 Nov; 18(4):737-57.  
<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, The Daily, Tuesday, March 13, 2001



# Count on us...

## for Campbell's® Eating Smart® soups. Always nourishing. Officially smart.

Health Check™ qualification makes official what we've known all along—Campbell's® Eating Smart® soups are a healthy choice<sup>1</sup> and are ideal for today's health-conscious consumers.

### “We're thrilled to hear the news!”

“We have a huge wellness initiative in our organization and a very active Wellness Committee. The Health Check™ qualification will support the Committee's efforts. I think this will be a bonus for our customers who want to have healthy food choices.”

*Barbara Smelt, Manager of Patient Food Services and Purchasing,  
Toronto East General Hospital*

### “That's good news for us!”

“We have a mandate to offer healthier alternatives. We serve Campbell's® Eating Smart® soups at least three times a week. They've been a success and featuring the Health Check™ logo will be a definite plus. It will help reinforce the healthy eating message.”

*David Hallman, C.C.C., Retail and Hospitality Coordinator,  
Royal Victoria Hospital, Barrie, Ontario*

### Proven nutrition you can rely on

Premium ingredients and delicious, wholesome taste with 3 grams fat or less per 250 mL serving. Soups that satisfy the growing consumer demand for healthy food choices that taste good.<sup>2</sup> Campbell's® Eating Smart® soups are a wonderful choice for patient menus and cafeterias. When diners spot the familiar Health Check™ symbol they'll instantly know that they've found a healthy soup option.

Adding even greater goodness, all Campbell's® Eating Smart® varieties provide between 2 and 10 grams of protein and several are a source of dietary fibre. What's more...

- each 250 mL serving contains less than 650 mg sodium,
- each 5 oz. patient menu serving contains less than 488 mg sodium.

### Making the smart choice simple.



Health Check™ is a national food information program developed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada to help consumers make healthy food choices. The Heart and Stroke Foundation's Health Check™ Program is your assurance that this product meets specific nutrient criteria based on Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. Campbell's® Eating Smart® soups are low in fat. Choosing foods prepared with little or no fat is part of healthy eating. Campbell Company of Canada financially supports the Health Check™ education program. This is not an endorsement.

For more information, see [www.healthcheck.org](http://www.healthcheck.org)



16 great-tasting varieties to choose from —PLUS—

Official Health Check™ qualification

There's never been a better time to serve Campbell's® Eating Smart® soups to all your diners.  
Call Campbell today for more details.

<sup>1</sup>. Eating Smart® soups are a healthy choice because they are low in fat. One of the Nutrition Recommendations for Canadians calls for a reduction in fat intake.

<sup>2</sup>. 2005 HealthFocus International Trend Survey, Canada

# Championing healthcare food service...

## Susan Owens, RD, Joins Campbell Company of Canada

Campbell proudly announces that Susan Owens—an accomplished leader and mentor—has joined the Away from Home Division. As Business Development Manager for Healthcare in Ontario, Susan will oversee national chain accounts, specializing in patient and resident food service. She will also lead the Ontario healthcare team, identifying new initiatives and opportunities.

MenuSource spoke with Susan as she came on board in January. “I’m very excited to work with customers across Canada in acute and long-term care and retirement residences to come up with menu solutions,” she said. “With my varied background, I can look at things from the other perspective—the customer’s—because *I’ve been the customer* in various settings over many years.”

### *She’s done it all*

Susan’s RD designation certainly opened the door to a rich and varied career. She got her start as a Therapeutic Dietitian...worked as a Director of Dietetics at a small hospital...and then as Senior Clinical Nutritionist at a large teaching hospital. “It was a huge change from a small facility where I was virtually the sole dietitian— to



one with a team of sixteen! As part of this role I was involved in the hospital menu-planning process and was the Clinical Dietitian on the geriatric assessment unit. That’s what ignited my interest in geriatric nutrition.”

For the last 17 years, Susan worked for Diversicare Canada Management Services as Consultant, Nutrition and Food Services. “I developed standards for food service operations and clinical nutrition programs. I also coordinated menu planning and product specifications for small and large long-term care homes and retirement residences in Ontario, and retirement residences in Saskatchewan, Alberta and

British Columbia. This was an amazing experience! It further deepened my respect for what food service departments accomplish every day.”

She has also volunteered on several committees within the dietetic profession and is a member of the Dietitians of Canada Long-Term Care Action Group.

### *MenuSource extends a warm welcome*

Susan relishes the chance to work for Campbell. “I’ve always known this to be a top quality company, one with top quality products and people—and a complete dedication to healthcare.”

Her ultimate goal is to provide delicious, nutritious meals for residents and patients in all healthcare settings. “It’s an honour to use my experience as a customer to help Campbell’s customers integrate our fine products into their day-to-day operations.”

“I look forward to meeting MenuSource readers at various industry events. Feel free to contact me at any time with your ideas and comments.”

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