



QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

Question: Is it permissible for staff and residents to dine together?

Answer: CMS addressed this issue in 2006 in the S&C-07-07 letter (Appendix B):

There is no federal requirement that prohibits this. We applaud efforts of facilities to make the dining experience less institutional and more like home. Our concern would be for the facility to make sure those residents who need assistance receive it in a timely fashion (not making residents wait to be assisted until staff finish their meals).

The Food and Dining Side of the Culture Change Movement: Identifying Barriers and Potential Solutions to furthering Innovation in Nursing Homes
Pre-symposium Paper states that:

Staff dining with residents is a culture change practice that has been implemented to build relationships between staff and residents. It opens up the opportunity for friendships to form and grow between those living in a nursing home and those caring for them. Of course, residents still need to receive any assistance they need, and good infection control needs to be practiced, and staff should interact with residents and not only with each other.

Dave's Memo: Therefore, the staff and residents dining together is an acceptable practice and is also strongly encouraged. Be sure to follow infection control principles, honor the resident's choice and last-but-not-least, be sure the resident receives assistance as needed.