



## Using Creative Solutions to Engage Residents

*Sodexo Seniors managers across the country re-imagined resident engagement to combat isolation during the COVID-19 shutdowns. Inside are examples of how they adapted during the pandemic and cultivated meaningful experiences that helped community members thrive in the face of unprecedented challenges.*

### The challenge: Addressing residents' increased focus on health

As requests for healthier food options began pouring in, dining rooms sought ways to offer a greater variety of food options while not sacrificing the quality residents desired.

- **Augment the menu:** Sodexo Seniors managers not only increased the salad and main course options available, but they also rotated menu items to keep things interesting.
- **Get adventurous:** Sodexo Seniors introduced plant-based substitutes, including our program with Impossible™ Foods. From the very first bite, residents were pleasantly surprised and began to request more Impossible meals.
- **Lean into their desire to learn:** Sodexo Seniors managers recognized a great opportunity to form a meaningful connection while taking social distancing precautions by introducing virtual nutrition classes. Residents began feeling more connected to the staff and started making healthier choices.

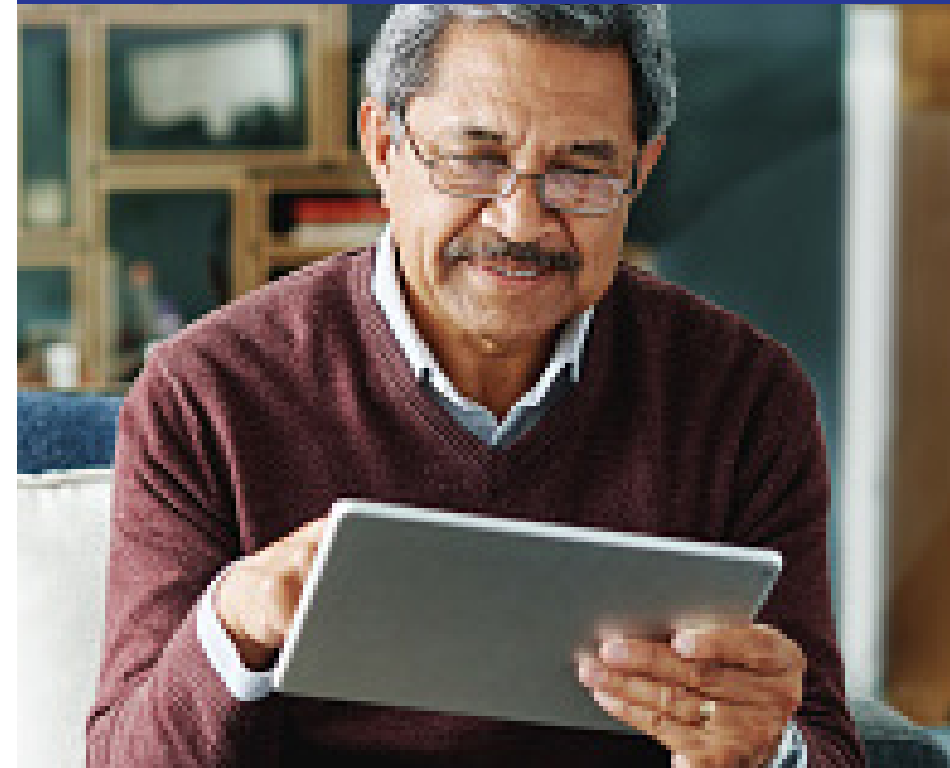
### The challenge: Staying in touch with residents when you must remain 6 feet apart

How do you ask a resident if they enjoyed their meal when you can't have a conversation? How do you provide residents with a daily menu and avoid close contact? How do you share important news?

- **Incorporate apps:** Embracing real-time resident satisfaction and feedback via digital means allowed residents to instantly communicate with the dining staff. This allowed food service teams to make necessary adjustments quickly and add certain foods or features into their regular rotation.
- **Digital menus:** Because waitstaff couldn't answer resident questions in person during the pandemic, managers introduced online menus to address any challenges. Now, residents in some communities can easily access the daily or weekly menu whenever they like.
- **Use the web to keep residents and families informed:** To make sure everyone was up to date on important information, managers communicated via social media, sent emails, and broadcasted via YouTube.



## Introduce variety, create events, and enrich the overall food experience to keep residents excited about their next meal.



### The challenge: Supporting the mental well-being of residents

Mourning those lost to COVID-19 and an increased sense of isolation greatly impacted the mental health of many residents. Sodexo Seniors managers paid particular attention to residents struggling with depression and anxiety, some for the first time, and made them a priority in their reopening plans.

- **Embrace the great outdoors:** When possible, managers chose to offer in-person dining alfresco, with proper safety protocols in place. Because dining outside is less likely to spread germs, Sodexo managers purchased a variety of outdoor cooking implements, seating, and other equipment to expand their dining rooms and allow residents to enjoy communal meals again.
- **Prioritize guests who are struggling:** As indoor dining slowly resumed, many facilities implemented a staggered opening, allowing only a few guests at first, then gradually adding more. Some managers selected which residents would be the first to return to the dining room based on the degree to which their mental health had declined.
- **Encourage community:** To reintroduce shared dining experiences, some managers created elaborate culinary displays, some renovated their spaces, and others added options such as bistros or outdoor grills.

## The challenge: Making food “fun”

How do you make food “fun” when it’s being delivered to a resident’s door three times a day, seven days a week for months on end? What do you do to keep residents excited about their next meal when they can’t chat with their neighbors?

- **Enhance food presentation:** Making each meal special during the pandemic meant adding a little something extra to every plate to make residents smile.
- **Celebrate national food days:** Pick a day, and you’re likely to find a food or beverage holiday to celebrate. Choosing some of these fun themes enabled kitchens to get creative and gave residents something to look forward to.
- **Introduce cultural holidays:** From breads and stews throughout Ramadan to brisket and latkes during Hanukkah, Sodexo used traditional, ethnic cuisines to introduce residents to holidays their friends and neighbors celebrate.
- **Host virtual wine tastings:** Some communities launched virtual wine tastings, delivering wine and cheese pairings to residents along with tasting notes.
- **Get creative:** From a daily snack cart to pop-up food events, several communities created events to bring excitement and spontaneity to the residents’ days. Others launched their own cooking shows through in-room TV channels.



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See how partnering with Sodexo Seniors can help you elevate dining and hospitality experiences to create a successful future.