

# NUTRITION & FOOD DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2022



**Danielle Watkins**  
BSc (Hons) RPHNtr

Hello and welcome to our Nutrition and Food Development Newsletter. My name is Danielle Watkins and I'm Head of Nutrition and Food Development at Mellors Catering Services. I lead the Development team who are out in your businesses, schools, colleges and academies on a daily basis training our Mellors food teams to produce wholesome and nutritious food for our customers.

As a registered Nutritionist, I understand the importance of a nutritious diet and the benefits that eating well can have on your workforce and pupils. It's our role at Mellors to generate innovative, nutritious food ideas and share them with your teams.

The following pages will give you an insight into what is happening behind the scenes at Mellors Catering Services and how the Nutrition and Food Development team have been developing and supporting your catering operations.



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## NEW TEAM EXPANSION

I'm absolutely delighted to share the internal promotion of Nick Constantine (from Catering Manager) and the recruitment of Stuart Dale. Both Nick and Stuart join us as Development Chefs - supporting our sites with food quality, development & presentation, as well as pupil engagement and new product innovation. The passion and enthusiasm that both Nick & Stuart have really is the icing on the cake for our team. They're the perfect addition to provide continued support for our catering teams, whilst complementing our Executive Development Chefs, John and Mike.



**Nick Constantine**  
Development Chef



**Stuart Dale**  
Development Chef

## HOT TOPIC VEGANISM

### SO, WHAT IS VEGANISM?

Veganism is a stricter form of vegetarian diet where vegans choose not to eat any products that come from animals, this includes, seafood, eggs, dairy, honey and meat. All of the foods eaten by a vegan will come from plant sources and include vegetables, fruit, beans, seeds, nuts and grains. People choose a vegan diet for a variety of different reasons, including concern about the treatment of animals, health reasons, environmental concerns or because of taste and social pressure.

### IS FOLLOWING A VEGAN DIET A HEALTHY CHOICE?



Vegan diets are becoming more popular and if they are well-planned, can support healthy living at every age and life-stage. If not well-planned, you can risk not getting enough of important vitamins and minerals like iron, zinc, vitamin B12 and calcium. These are all extremely important for healthy development and are most commonly found in the types of foods that you wouldn't eat as a vegan. Although generally speaking a vegan diet is lower in saturated fat and salt, vegan foods can still be processed and cooked in unhealthy ways just like any other foods, so it is important to plan and choose carefully.



## GETTING THE RIGHT BALANCE

**A healthy vegan diet must contain good sources of iron, zinc, B12 and calcium, such as:**



- Green, leafy vegetables – such as broccoli, cabbage and okra, but not spinach.
- Fortified unsweetened soya, rice and oat drinks.
- Pulses like lentils, beans and chickpeas.
- Brown and white bread (in the UK, calcium is added to white and brown flour by law).
- Dried fruit, such as raisins, prunes, figs and dried apricots.
- Fortified breakfast cereals.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING VEGAN?

In the UK, it is estimated that well-planned vegan diets only need one third of the fertile land, fresh water and energy that a typical British 'meat-and-dairy' based diet does and it is well known that meat and dairy consumption contributes to greenhouse (GHG) emissions, so reducing animal based foods in our diets can be beneficial to the planet.

It can also improve our health too. There is a lot of evidence available showing that too much red and processed meat increases the risk of some cancers and heart disease, so replacing these foods with plant-based alternatives would be beneficial.

**“Eating processed meat raises the risk of heart disease by a fifth”**

University of Oxford, 2021

## SHOULD WE BE PROMOTING VEGANISM TO CHILDREN?

A vegan diet has many benefits to both the planet and our health but only if it is well planned and includes a variety of foods that provide the essential nutrients we would more commonly get from meat and dairy foods.

In education, children are still learning about the foods they eat and following a strict Vegan diet may interfere with growth and development of a young adult's body.

We would recommend mixing up your weekly food intake and incorporating more plant-based dishes throughout the week. This can support sustainability, health and well-being and is the perfect solution for pupils and students.



## RECIPE INNOVATION **PLANT-POWERED KITCHEN BY MELLORS**

The Nutrition and Food Development team have been working hard behind the scenes to create a range of fantastic plant-based recipes, suitable for those following a vegan diet, to launch in our sites. We know the demand is high for more plant-based dishes and this will only increase so, we have created a bank of innovative dishes that our Catering Managers can utilise on their menus.



Look out for the plant-based logo featuring on our menus soon.



We have also created a bank of promotional materials to educate our customers around increasing plant-based dishes in their diets. For primary schools, our fun plant-based characters encourage pupils to try something new and for the rest of the business we have discussed the benefits to the environment, animals and your health.

If you can't wait and want to try something now, scan the QR code to be taken to a fantastic recipe for **Cauliflower Hot 'Wings'**! This is definitely a firm family favourite of ours, enjoy!



Show us  
how you did...

 @MELLORSCATERING

### PLANT-POWERED POP UP

To support the launch of our plant-based recipe range we have created a **Plant-Powered Pop Up!**

Our Plant-Powered Pop Up will be showcased in your main restaurant at lunchtime with a range of free food samples and resources.

Following the Pop Up, the popular plant-based dishes will be incorporated into the main menu and made part of our everyday offer.



Our Area Managers enjoying some plant-based samples



## UPDATE **NATASHA'S LAW: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?**

In the UK there are an estimated 2million people living with a diagnosed food allergy, plus thousands more with coeliac disease and food intolerances. It can be challenging for allergy sufferers to safely eat away from the home.

Natasha's Law was introduced in October 2021 following the death of a young girl who had an allergic reaction to a sandwich that contained sesame. There was no allergen information on the label so she felt it was safe for her to eat, however a hidden ingredient was included in the bread and caused her to have a severe reaction that led to her death.



To minimise the risk of this happening in future, Natasha's Law requires all foods that are freshly made and packaged on-site to be labelled with a full ingredients list and allergen information.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MELLORS CATERING SERVICES AND OUR SITES?

Over the last 18 months, the Nutrition and Food Development team, with support from Procurement and Marketing, have worked hard to ensure that the introduction of this new law is as simple and straightforward for our teams as possible. I am pleased to say that with the support of the central

team we are now managing the labelling side of things centrally, freeing up our catering teams to concentrate on creating fabulous, fresh food without the admin stress of generating the content of a legal label. Natasha's Law is now live in all of our restaurants (excluding primary schools, who don't pre-package food).

### HOT TOPIC **KEEPING OUR CUSTOMERS ALLERGEN SAFE**

For any customer who has an allergy or intolerance, we go one step further than Natasha's Law and can provide a menu to meet the customer's needs. We work very closely with our suppliers to provide our Catering Managers with an allergen-free shopping list with an extensive range of products that can be used to support our customers' allergen needs.

For Education sites, we encourage you to keep a copy of the parent pack at the school reception. Pupils with allergies and intolerances can collect this and then provide the Catering Manager with the relevant information about the allergy or intolerance. The Catering Manager will then provide a menu suitable for that pupil.

For Business and Industry sites, we have a notice in our dining room advising customers to speak to the Catering Manager, who will be able to advise what choices are suitable over the weekly menu cycle.




## WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? **QUIZ DANIELLE ON THE FACTS**

Do you have a link from your website to Mellors? We have an **Ask the Nutritionist** section on our website and it's a great tool for customers, parents and staff to raise concerns about their health and well-being or ask any general questions about the offer and menu.

Your Catering Manager can provide the restaurant menus for you to include on your website, but why not have a direct link to our website – **[www.mellors.co.uk](http://www.mellors.co.uk)** – too?

### Quiz Danielle on the Facts



There is a lot of diet and nutrition information out there but sometimes it can be helpful to have some extra guidance – that's why you can email our registered nutritionist, Danielle with your questions via the link below. Danielle specialises in Childhood Nutrition and can answer all of your questions regarding school food, allergies, fussy eaters and general health and well-being.

Name

Email

School

Question

## ASK OUR NUTRITIONIST

## COLLABORATION WITH LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY



**LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY**

During the summer months, we will be working in partnership with Leeds Beckett University to offer two placement opportunities to Public Health and Nutrition students. We are challenging the students to create some engaging parental health and well-being literature that can be shared with our school families throughout the next academic year. Watch this space!

During the pandemic, we sent out our family recipe packs and the feedback from you was incredible. I can't wait to share what the students comes up with and for parents and families to reap the benefits of the information provided...watch this space!



## HOT TOPIC MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS

At Mellors, we think good food = good mood. Eating well is a staple part of keeping both your body *and* mind in tip-top condition.

**But did you know that Mellors Catering Services also has two trained Mental Health First Aiders?**



Jenna Calderbank  
HR Manager



Ethan Anderson  
HR Co Ordinator



The health and well-being of our staff, your catering teams, is paramount in the success of our business. It is now estimated that approximately **1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental illness each year**. In 2016, 15.8 million UK workdays were lost due to mental illness.

The largest causes of sickness absence for our country's workforce is depression, stress, and anxiety. **Mental illness costs UK businesses around £35 billion every year**; this equates to £10.6 billion lost to sickness absence, £21.2 billion in reduced productivity, and £3.1 billion in substituting staff members who vacate their roles due to mental illness.



### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER?

The role of the Mental Health First Aider is to support employees at Mellors who are experiencing mental ill health or distress. This support can vary from having a non-judgemental conversation with a colleague, through to guiding them towards the right support.

#### THE MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER ROLE INCLUDES:

- Being able to recognise the early signs and symptoms of common workplace mental health illnesses.
- Having the necessary skills to have a supportive, non-judgemental conversation with those who need it.
- Possessing the knowledge and confidence to guide colleagues to the appropriate professional support if they require it.
- Promoting greater awareness of mental health in the workplace and reducing stigma.

Throughout the pandemic this service was used a lot and the feedback from our teams has been incredible. If it is something you think would be beneficial in your workplace, please feel free to speak to Ethan Anderson one of our Mental Health First Aid team, who can chat you through the course that he took and advise of the benefits it brought to the well-being of our teams.

✉ Email Ethan at [Ethana@mellors.co.uk](mailto:Ethana@mellors.co.uk)



WWW.MELLORSCATERING.CO.UK

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Thank you for taking the time to read our Nutrition and Food Development Newsletter. If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch at  [daniellew@mellors.co.uk](mailto:daniellew@mellors.co.uk).

Many thanks,

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