

Food and nutrition on the Older Person's Unit

You should have received the leaflet, **Welcome – information about your stay**, which has useful information about your stay in hospital and on the Older Person's Unit. This information sheet gives you information about the meal service and nutritional care available on the unit. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Your meals

Eating well helps you to recover, so we want you to benefit as much as possible from the food you eat while in hospital. We make appetising, nourishing meals using fresh ingredients in our hospital kitchens.

Mealtimes vary slightly from ward to ward, but the approximate times are:

- **Breakfast: 7.30am–8am**
- **Lunch: 12.30pm–1.30pm**
- **Dinner: 5.30pm–6.30pm**

At each mealtime you will be able to choose from a variety of hot and cold food. If you have special dietary or religious needs, or cannot see anything on the menu that suits you, please let the food service assistant know when he or she is taking your order.

As well as the main menu we have a selection of special menus:

- Ethnic and culturally diverse foods, including Caribbean, Asian vegetarian, Halal, East and West African, Somali and Kosher
- Puree menu
- Dairy free menu
- Gluten free, vegetarian and soft option versions of every main meal featured on the menu.

If these menus do not meet your needs, please tell a member of staff who will be able to help you.

Protected mealtimes

All wards have a 'protected mealtime' policy at lunch and dinner. During these times non-essential staff and visitors are asked to leave the ward so that you can enjoy your meal without being disturbed. Friends, family and volunteers are welcome to stay on the ward if they are helping you eat.

Assistance at mealtimes

If it is felt that you need assistance with meals, the food service assistant or nurse can help you. You can be given a coloured tray with your meal so that staff are aware that you need assistance.

Red tray – this indicates that a high level of assistance is required and that a member of staff should stay with you for the duration of your meal to help you. There are also red-lidded water jugs to let staff know you would like assistance with your drinks.

Amber tray – this indicates that a medium level of assistance is required. Whether you need help cutting up food, encouragement with your meal or any other form of support, a member of staff will be able to help you.

Green tray – this indicates that you are able to eat independently, although staff are available on the ward to help you at mealtimes should you need it.

Adapted cutlery

If you find it difficult to use normal cutlery the ward can provide you with specially adapted cutlery to make it easier for you to eat. Please ask a member of staff if you would like to know more.

Mealtime volunteers

The Older Person's Unit benefits from a group of volunteers who assist the ward staff at mealtimes, making it easier for meals to be served warm and for you to feel you can take your time with your meal without being rushed. Volunteers do not help to feed patients, but they can help you to get the meal you want, assist with cutting up foods and opening packets, and let the nursing staff know if you are having any difficulties.

Nutrition co-ordinators

Each ward has a nutrition board that keeps a record of special dietary requirements, food preferences and patients who need assistance with their meals. A nutrition co-ordinator is allocated daily to oversee the meal service and ensure that you get the right meal and the right support.

Missed meals – snack boxes

The NHS Plan states that "if a patient has missed a meal because of treatments or tests, or has been admitted without an opportunity to order a meal, then a snack box should be available." It also states that a snack box "should be available to someone who wants a lighter meal than the normal menu". Snack boxes are available 24 hours a day for patients who need something to eat outside of normal eating hours.

Hygiene management

All items are wrapped with the exception of apples, bananas, oranges and other peelable fruits.

Availability

All items listed will normally be in stock but there may be times, in exceptional circumstances, when certain items are not available.

The ward pantry

Snacks and drinks are available on the ward 24 hours a day. There are regular tea and snack rounds mid-morning, mid-afternoon and later in the evening. If you require a drink or snack outside of these times, please let a member of staff know. They can tell you about the range of items available and help you with your choice. Items include toast, cereal, cheese, baked beans, spaghetti hoops and soup.

Nutritional screening

You will be weighed when you are admitted to the ward and then on a weekly basis throughout your stay. Good nutrition is an important part of your recovery and this is one way that nursing staff can monitor whether you are eating and drinking adequately.

If you or the nursing staff are concerned about your eating or your weight during your admission to hospital, you can be referred to the dietitian, who will come to see you on the ward. The dietitian will assess your nutritional status and work with you, your family and the ward staff to make sure you are getting the best possible nutrition during your hospital stay. The dietitian may also make recommendations to you and your GP when you go home, or refer you to the community dietitians for ongoing support.

Speech and language therapy

If you have difficulties with swallowing you can be referred to a speech and language therapist (SLT) for assessment. They can assess you and give advice on swallowing safety and comfort.

Request feedback

We welcome feedback, good and bad, so that we can continue to improve our service.

We hope your stay on the Older Person's Unit is as pleasant as possible.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of our dietitians on **020 7188 2010**.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

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