



Protected Mealtimes

Information for patients and visitors

What is meant by “protected mealtimes”?

Good food can help patients to eat well, giving them the nutrients they need to recover from surgery or illness. During your stay in hospital the Catering Department will provide a range of meals developed within the **Better Hospital Food** programme, which aims to ensure the consistent delivery of high quality food and food services to patients.

During your stay we will provide you with breakfast, lunch and supper as well as hot and cold drinks during the day, with a light snack if required.

To ensure that we enhance and improve effective nutrition all wards have **protected mealtimes**. Protected mealtimes are periods of time when routine activity on the ward is reduced so that nurses, ward based teams and catering staff can serve and supervise meals and give assistance to those patients who need help to eat and drink.

Please check mealtimes with the ward staff.

What does this mean for patients?

- An improved “mealtime” experience
- Being able to eat without interruption
- More mealtime assistance from nurses
- Protected mealtimes will not prevent patients from seeing their doctor or healthcare professional, or from having pre-arranged or urgent investigations or treatments; however, staff will ensure that no patient goes without appropriate nutrition.

What does it mean for staff?

- Staff will have more time to prepare patients for their meals
- Staff will have more time to devote to helping patients at mealtimes

Assistance with feeding

Many patients require assistance with eating and drinking. This will be assessed when the patient is admitted to hospital. In order to ensure that the ward staff prioritise their duties at mealtimes, patients requiring assistance with feeding will be identified either by having a red tray or a red napkin.

How can visitors help?

- We welcome visitors who wish to help their relative or friend at mealtimes; however, please check with ward staff before giving assistance
- Otherwise, we ask that visitors come to see their relative or friend outside of mealtimes

For more information, please speak to the Ward Manager or Matron for the ward.



Please use this space to write any notes or questions you may have.



Further information and advice can be obtained from:

Hospital Caterer's Association

Web: www.hospitalcaterers.org/better-hospital-food

NPSA – National Patient Safety Agency

Web: www.npsa.nhs.uk

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the PALS Team. We will do our best to arrange this.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you would like to raise any concerns, make comments and suggestions or require information on Trust services, you can contact **PALS**. Office opening times are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm. Both offices offer a 24 hour answering machine. Messages will be responded to within one working day, so please do leave a contact number.

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