

Food and Drink in Hospital

Information for patients and visitors



Eating and drinking well while you are in hospital plays an important part in getting better. It can:

- ❖ Help you to get better sooner
- ❖ Reduce the risk of complications
- ❖ Help you to get home earlier

This leaflet explains what you can expect from us when you come into hospital.

YOUR APPETITE

Injury and illness can affect your appetite.

You may not want to eat the same amount of food that you would normally and in some cases you may lose your ability to taste food because of your injury or illness.

TASTE

We know that head injuries and conditions such as ear infections, respiratory infections and cancers can affect, or change the flavours you taste. Your ability to taste food may also be affected by drug treatments. This in turn may result in you eating less.

It is important that you maintain a good balanced diet to help you recover from your injury/illness.

WHAT CAN I DO TO IMPROVE MY SENSE OF TASTE?

Good oral hygiene will help you to maintain your sense of taste.

Make sure you maintain your daily fluid intake – see page 4.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I COME INTO HOSPITAL?

When you are admitted, nursing staff will carry out an assessment called “nutritional screening”. This lets them know if you could be at risk of undernutrition, for example if you are underweight for your height. If a risk is identified staff will discuss this with you.

WHAT WILL I EAT AND DRINK?

We aim to provide you with tasty and nutritious menu choices.

Times vary slightly from ward to ward, but generally meals and drinks are served between the following times.

Meal	Time	Type
Breakfast 	7:40 am to 8:30am	Continental style with fruit juice, porridge, cereals, rolls, bread, jam and marmalade portions.
Lunch	12:00 noon to 1:00pm	3 courses will be available.
Supper 	5:00pm to 6:00pm	2 courses will be available.


Meals are available in small, standard and large portions.

DRINKS

You will be provided with a flask/jug of fresh water at your bedside. If you run out of fresh water at any time please ask one of the nursing staff to top up your flask/jug.

It is very important that you drink enough fluid. You should aim to drink at least 1.6 litres or 3 pints (8-10 cups) a day. Staff will come round with a choice of tea or coffee at least 6 times each day. Bovril and cup-a-soup may also be available in some areas.

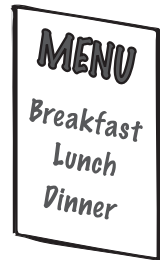
You will be offered water or alternative fluids, including milk where appropriate, with all meals and at the following times:

	Time	Type
Mid-morning	10:00am to 11:00am	Hot drink
Afternoon	2:00pm to 3:00pm	
Evening	8:00pm to 8:45pm	

HOW DO I ORDER MY MEALS?

You can order your meal in one of two ways:

- (1) In some wards a nurse will give you a menu card to choose the meals for the following day. If you need help to fill out the menu card please ask one of the nurses. Many of the dishes on the menu card have a symbol (for example, healthy choice) to help you make the right choice.
- (2) In other wards, you will be able to choose from the trolley at mealtimes. Menus are on display in ward areas to help you select your choice.



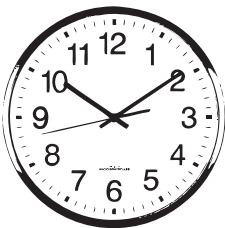
You can ask for a small, medium or large portion.

WHAT IF I MISS A MEAL?

There may be times when you are away from the ward for treatment. If this happens at a meal time the ward will order a fresh meal from the main kitchen on your return. Outwith regular mealtimes a snack-meal may be provided. Please let the ward staff know you have arrived back in the ward and that you would like to have your meal.

WHAT ARE “PROTECTED MEALTIMES”?

All our wards operate a system called “protected mealtimes”.



This means that you will have enough time to have your meals without too much interruption. It also makes sure that nursing staff are able to spend as much time as possible with patients who need help with eating and drinking.

WHAT IF I HAVE SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS?

If you weren't well enough to tell us what you like when you arrived in hospital, please speak to a nurse when you can.

Please let the nursing staff know if:

- ❖ You are on a therapeutic diet at home such as “gluten free”, or if you have any food allergies. A therapeutic diet is modified from a normal diet and is prescribed to meet a medical or special nutritional need.
- ❖ You want a Halal, Kosher or Vegan meal.
- ❖ You need special utensils to eat with.
- ❖ You need assistance to eat.

WHERE ARE MEALS SERVED?

Depending on how well you are and which ward you are in, meals will be served at your bedside or in the dining room. Please wash your hands before meal times – let the nurses know if you need help to do this.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Your views on the food and drink you receive while in hospital are important to us. If you are asked to complete one of our Patient Catering Opinion surveys, please fill it out honestly.



This will let us know what we need to do better in the future. However, if you have any concerns please speak to a nurse in the ward so that any problems can be addressed at the time. A member of the catering department will be happy to visit you on the ward to discuss any concerns you may have about your meals.

CAN MY FAMILY OR FRIENDS BRING FOOD INTO HOSPITAL?

Yes. However, there are risks associated with bringing food into hospital so it is important that your visitors follow these guidelines if they are going to bring you food:

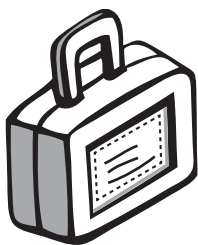


GUIDELINES FOR VISITORS

Only bring small amounts of food in for your relative/friend. **Please do not bring food in for, or share food with other patients.**

BRINGING FOOD ONTO THE WARD

Certain foods pose a higher risk of food poisoning than others if not stored or prepared appropriately. It is therefore important that you tell the nurse in charge when you have brought food into hospital, especially if the items are considered to be “high risk” (see the Table on page 8). This enables the nursing staff to document the details in your relative or friend’s notes for tracing purposes if any issues arise.



If you have prepared food at home it is essential that all containers or packets have a label with your relative/friend’s name and the date the food was brought into the hospital.

Suitable

Try and bring healthy options that have lower fat and sugar content.

- ✓ Fresh fruit and fruit products - these should be washed where necessary
- ✓ Dried fruit (apricots, raisins)
- ✓ Pre-wrapped biscuits and cakes (oatcakes/oat biscuits, plain biscuits, rice cakes, crackers, breadsticks, fruit loaf, plain/fruit muffins)
- ✓ Pre-wrapped chocolates or sweets
- ✓ Packets of crisps (low fat or baked)
- ✓ Drinks in bottles, cans or cartons, no glass, plastic only (no added sugar fruit drinks or diet drinks)
- ✓ Baked products such as pancakes, scones, fruit cakes should be wrapped or in containers

High Risk

These foods have a higher risk of causing food poisoning

- ❖ All cooked meat and poultry, gravy & stock
- ❖ Fresh or artificial cream products, custard, yoghurts, mousse.
- ❖ Cooked rice
- ❖ Sandwiches and rolls
- ❖ Any other item of food that needs to be refrigerated or heated.

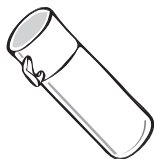
Outbreaks of illness such as E. coli O157 and Salmonella in hospitals have been linked to homemade cream cakes, chicken and other high risk foods.

RESTRICTIONS

Diet

If your relative/friend is on a therapeutic diet for a medical condition, please check with the nursing staff to make sure the food you bring in is suitable for them to eat.

Hot food (High Risk)



If you are bringing hot food into hospital it should be brought in a flask and eaten on arrival. **There are no facilities for heating food on the wards.**

Cold/chilled food (High Risk)



There are limited facilities for refrigerating food on the wards. You should only leave food if you have checked with the nursing staff first.

Packaged Items

The external wrapping should be in place, clean and not torn. Make sure the food is in date, check that the “Use By” or “Best Before” dates have not passed.

PREPARING FOOD AT HOME

If you are preparing food in your own home remember the following food hygiene tips:

- ❖ Do not prepare food if you are unwell, particularly if you are suffering from diarrhoea and/or vomiting.
- ❖ Wash your hands after going to the toilet and before handling food.
- ❖ Wrap foods well before bringing them into hospital to prevent contamination.
- ❖ For foods that will “spoil” in the heat, it is advisable to use a “cool box” or insulated bag to carry them in.
- ❖ Do not prepare food too far in advance of when it will be eaten.



TAKEAWAY FOODS

In exceptional circumstances these high risk foods can be brought into the ward.

- ❖ You must always seek permission from the nurse in charge.
- ❖ Food must be eaten as soon as possible following delivery.
- ❖ Leftovers must be discarded immediately.



EATING WELL AT HOME

If nutritional screening has shown that you could be at risk of undernutrition, nursing staff will provide you with information and an advice leaflet before you leave hospital.



Nursing staff can provide you with general healthy eating advice and leaflets are available throughout NHS Lanarkshire.

Further information on Healthy Eating can be found at:

- ❖ Your local pharmacy
- ❖ Your local GP surgery
- ❖ NHS Lanarkshire website **<http://www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk/HealthyLiving/EatWell/Pages/default.aspx>**
- ❖ NHS inform (Common Health Questions Section) **<http://www.nhsinform.co.uk/common-health-questions/categories/healthy-eating.aspx>**

If you would like this leaflet in an alternative language or format please ask a member of staff to contact the Patient Information Manager or contact the NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line.

NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line

Telephone 08453 130130

<http://www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk>

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