Protected Mealtimes & the Red Tray System
Department of Medicine
Protected Mealtimes and the Red Tray System
Information for Patients and Visitors

What are protected mealtimes?

This is a period of time over lunch and supper, when all activities on the ward will stop. The nurses, food service staff and volunteers will be available to help serve the food, and give assistance to any patients who may need help with their meals. This will help the staff to dedicate all their attention to our patients without interruptions.

Why is it a good idea?

Patients themselves say they would prefer to eat their meals with fewer distractions on the ward and without any interruptions. Research has found that patients eat better, which helps towards their recovery. It creates a more relaxed and calm atmosphere, giving patients time to socialise and digest their food.

Who will be on the ward?

Apart from patients the only other people on the ward will be nursing staff, food service staff and volunteers, all with the same aim - to help, encourage, and monitor our patients’ food intake.
Supplements

On the ward we can offer you many types of supplements, in a variety of flavours, these include:

Build up soups
Flavoured drinks
Desserts

If you have any specific dietary requirements, do not hesitate to let us know.

You can ask to see a Dietitian if you have any concerns. Tea, coffee and fruit juices are available anytime of the day.

If you miss a meal please make Nursing staff aware, as hot meals are available 24 hours a day.

during mealtimes and allow staff time to interact with their patients.

All emergency treatments will, however, still be carried out.

What can relatives or visitors do to help?

If you are visiting a ward displaying the protected mealtime poster, please respect this and try to visit outside of restricted times.

If, in order to help your relative or friend to eat, you normally visit at mealtimes, we are happy for you to continue to do this. Please ask the nurse in charge how you can help out.

If possible please try to avoid telephoning during protected meal times for information, so that staff can concentrate on assisting their patients.

If you have any worries or concerns please do not hesitate to talk to a member of the nursing staff, or ward manager.

Thank you for your help and support

Protected mealtimes
12.00 - 13.00
and 17.00 - 18.00 hours

Visiting Times
Ward staff to advise
The Red Tray System

Helping to reduce Nutritional risk in Hospitals.
This patient focused project is used to ensure all nutritional at risk patients are identified and supported. The aim is to focus attention on the patients’ food consumption, improving his/her nutritional status.

Why the red tray?

A red tray provides a signal that vulnerable patients need help and support from staff, or has a poor dietary intake.

A poor dietary intake can adversely affect quality of life; wound healing, rehabilitation potential and rate of recovery.

Who should have a red tray?

A Registered nurse will undertake a nutritional screen when you are admitted to the ward. This screen looks at your current body mass index, any recent weight loss and what your nutritional intake is currently like.

Also to assist you with food choices and eating if necessary, you may need to be referred to a dietitian. We will keep a food record chart, and repeat the screening in 3 days.

You are assessed and subsequently weighed at regular intervals. Assessment findings lead to the support of patients at risk including, Dietetic and Speech & Language.

When mealt ime is finished

The food service staff will not remove the red tray, without first checking with a member of the nursing staff.

A Nurse will complete a food record chart, documenting the amount, and what supplements were provided.

You will only be removed from the red tray system; if the nursing team agree that he/she is no longer at risk nutritionally.

On Discharge

When a patient discharged home is still at risk, their carers are informed.

If a patient is discharged and is not going home, the nutritional status will be detailed in the transfer of care letter to the residential, nursing home or other care setting.