

Don't go hungry in hospital

Information for patients and residents



Eating well in hospital is important. It can help you recover from your illness more quickly so you can go home sooner.

Unfortunately many people are at risk of becoming under-nourished when they are in hospital. Older people are particularly at risk.

Many people need help and encouragement to eat and drink, to reach their meal tray, open packaging and to ensure they receive food and drinks which are appropriate to their needs.

You can help by letting our staff know which food and drink is appropriate to your needs and what help you need at mealtimes.

This leaflet has information about:

- what to tell our staff when you are admitted to hospital
- asking for help with meals
- asking to be weighed
- asking about other nutritional support.



When you arrive

When you get to hospital please tell our staff if:

- you have recently lost weight
- you have eaten little in the last 5 or more days
- you have diabetes or take diuretics (water tablets)
- you have difficulty chewing or swallowing
- you take nutritional supplement drinks
- you have special food or drink requirements due to:
 - a special diet
 - religious or cultural beliefs
 - personal taste.



Ask for help with mealtimes

Please talk to our staff about your needs as soon as possible, so we can give you the care you need.

Staff can help with:

- filling in your menu form
- reaching your food tray
- opening containers
- cutting up food
- sitting you upright at meal times
- making sure you have received the right meal.

All ward staff can help you with your food, eating, and nutrition needs. This includes:

- nurses
- doctors
- dietitians
- dietitian assistants (who deliver your menu)
- speech pathologists
- other allied health staff
- staff who deliver your meals and drinks.



Ask to be weighed

Your weight may change without you noticing. Ask to be weighed when you are admitted, and at regular intervals during your time in hospital.



Ask about other nutritional support

You can ask for snacks or nutritional supplement drinks to be delivered between meals. These are particularly important if you are having smaller main meals. Ask to see the dietitian who can arrange this for you.

Don't forget to drink regularly. Aim for 6 glasses of fluid a day unless staff have advised you otherwise.

If you would like to bring food from home please refer to the *Can I bring food for patients and residents?* brochure.

Contact

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Acknowledgement

Adapted from the Hungry to be Heard Campaign, Age Concern England
www.ageconcern.org.uk