

THE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

NEW ADULT CORE MENU

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper reports on the introduction of the new Core Menu, along with the range of Special Adult Menus for all patients receiving treatment in the Trust. Several years of planning, consultation and testing were carried out before implementation, which took place in December 2011 in the Freeman Hospital and January 2012 in the Royal Victoria Infirmary.

During the first six months of operation, all aspects of the programme will be carefully monitored and at the end of the six months, there will be a thorough review. A report will be published later in 2012.

The principles upon which the menus have been developed are wholly consistent with latest, best practice dietetic and nutritional thinking and, in particular, with the recently published Care Quality Commission Guidelines.

The programme is based on a new core menu designed to satisfy not only the nutritional and dietetic needs of the vast majority of patients in hospital, but also their taste preferences. Based upon the classic three meals a day, with snacks and hot drinks available 24 hours, the range of choices is wide and extremely flexible and runs on a fourteen day rotation cycle.

It is designed to encourage healthier eating habits whilst still allowing patients to make their own choices. Preferences are still offered which cater for when patients want their main meal, whether they are meat eaters, vegetarians, whether they want hot or cold, whether they want salads or sandwiches and whether they want hot or cold desserts.

In short, its aim is to ensure that all patients will get healthy, satisfying and tasty meals throughout their time in hospital, and furthermore that this could be continued after discharge.

In addition to the core menu, there is a wide range of specialised menus designed to satisfy not only all cultural and religious needs, but also any special medical needs.

This is a major new initiative which has only been possible because of outstanding teamwork between many departments.

'High quality hospital food at its very best, *with a personal touch*'.

Sandy Harvey
Public Governor
6th January 2012

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NEW ADULT CORE MENU

1. BACKGROUND

Good nutritional care must fulfill three key criteria - robust nutritional screening, the provision of well balanced and accessible nutrition for all patients, and additional support for patients with complex nutritional needs. The Trust is working actively to promote and embed best practice across all these three key areas.

Meeting the nutritional needs of patients continues to be a high priority across the Trust in all clinical areas. The role profiles of Matrons and Ward Sisters include clear statements regarding responsibilities to ensure nutritional needs of patients are met. Ward housekeepers are present on most inpatient areas and support the nursing team in meeting the nutritional needs of patients across the day.

Three meals a day are served. There is a choice of hot and cold meals at both lunch and dinner. The menu cards include a prompt to ensure patients who need assistance are identified to staff as meals are served. Hot drinks are available across the day, with water always available. Snack boxes are also provided across the Trust for patients who miss a meal.

Over the last three years major redevelopment of the core inpatient menu has been undertaken, involving extensive consultation and input. This has been carried out to further improve the provision of all the food offered to our patients within the Trust, reflecting current popular choices and providing clear, healthy-choice options. The result is the creation and introduction of the new core menu.

The menu was developed in conjunction with nursing staff, nutritionists, patients, third sector representatives and governors. The new menu completely fulfils the new guidelines given by the Care Quality Commission on the provision of food in hospitals. One particular issue that is now cited is that the food offered to patients in hospital should be such that it is not only healthy and nutritious, but also sustainable for when the patient is discharged back home.

The vast majority of us now have a lighter lunch, and eat a main meal in the evening. This is therefore the basis of how the new menu has been structured.

The new Core Menu has now been started in both the Freeman Hospital and the RVI. Over the next six months all aspects will be thoroughly monitored and data collected. At the end of this initial, six-month implementation period, a comprehensive review will be undertaken to ensure best-practice and maximum quality for our patients.

2. THE LUNCH MENU

The lunch menu is designed to be the lighter meal for most people. However, given that some people will still prefer to have a hot meal, or their main meal at lunchtime, a hot option will always be available for both meat-eaters and vegetarians.

The lunch menu will still offer three courses, each with a hot option.

1. There is always a homemade soup available, as well as chilled fruit juices
2. Two hot main dishes – one of which caters for vegetarians - as well as appropriate accompanying side dishes, such as rice or potatoes, gravy and a hot vegetable. The cold alternatives are:
 - A salad option.
 - Sandwiches in brown or white bread
 - Various appropriate, accompanying side dishes
3. A hot pudding (a creamy, milky pudding) is offered, or:
 - A selection of cold, light deserts such as mousse or ice cream.
 - Fresh fruit and cheese and biscuits.

3. THE EVENING MENU

The evening menu is designed to be the main meal of the day for most people.

Again, three courses are offered. However, should a lighter meal be preferred, this will also be available, with both hot and cold options.

1. A different homemade soup, or chilled fruit juice
2. The three hot options always include at least one vegetarian choice. The cold alternatives are:
 - A salad option.
 - Sandwiches in brown or white bread
 - Various appropriate, accompanying side dishes, including at least two different carbohydrate and two different vegetables.
3. A traditional, hot pudding such as a pie, crumble or sponge with hot custard, or:
 - Yoghurts, fresh fruit or tinned fruit are alternative options to complete the meal.

4. CORE MENU SUMMARY

The new menu reflects recent, up to date opinion on the best ways of catering for patients in hospital.

It is worth explaining some of the more important changes in greater depth.

1. The salad choice and the sandwich choice are the same at both lunch and the evening meal. Many people in hospital find it difficult to eat and may tend to 'make do' or take the easy option. However, they are less likely to choose cold sandwiches at both meals if they are the same so this encourages such people to have at least one hot meal a day.
2. On the flip side of this, we do have a national problem of obesity. So as the Care Quality Commission recommends, we offer menus which promote both healthy eating choices, as well as healthy eating models. Few of us need two heavy, three course meals a day. Having a lighter menu at one meal therefore promotes healthier eating habits, whilst still allowing for personal preferences and providing for all types of patients. For example, the hot puddings at lunchtime are always 'creamy' and are therefore particularly suitable for patients requiring building up.
3. Thirdly, there is a wide, comprehensive selection of foods on offer over the two-week cycle period. They have been carefully chosen and balanced to ensure maximum variety on a day to day basis. Meat-eaters, vegetarians and fish-eaters are all catered for and offered different choices at each meal.

5. FURTHER SPECIAL MENUS

A wide range of special menus and nutritional supplements is available. These are used according to assessed care needs. These menus provide for normal nutrition, cultural preferences and all special dietary requirements in relation to certain diseases such as renal disease, food intolerances, or the need to have food and drink where the texture has been modified. So in addition to the core adult menu, the following menus are also all available:

- Dedicated a la carte Children's Menu for all children being treated throughout the Trust. There is also a separate, children's Renal Menu and Gluten-Free Menu for children with kidney and coeliac diseases.
- Fortified Menu for those who need extra calories and protein (identified in nutrition screening which is carried out as standard on admission.)
- Multicultural Menu (this includes a range of non meat and vegan dishes, as well as Halal choices from an NHS approved Halal manufacturer)
- Kosher Menu (from an NHS approved kosher manufacturer)
- Textured Menu (for those who require soft, very soft or puree foods)
- Renal Menu (for adult patients with kidney disease, with a separate Children's Renal Menu - see above.)
- Gluten-Free Menu (for coeliac and other gluten-intolerance related diseases, with a separate Children's G-F menu, see above.)
- Highly specialised 'Free From' Menu for food allergies and intolerances

Snack fridges are accessible by all wards and provide light, cold snacks (such as sandwiches, fruit and yoghurt) 24 hours a day, should a patient miss a meal.

Furthermore, it must be said that the Catering Departments in both the RVI and

the Freeman Hospital are absolutely 100% committed to delivering the best service and highest quality food at all times. They are willing to try to accommodate individual requests and happy to visit individual patients.

6. CONCLUSION

Work is continually progressing in a number of different, key areas within the Trust to ensure that good and appropriately assessed, nutritional care is constantly delivered to all our patients. We aim to ensure that best practice is integral to all aspects of nutritional care and is supported robustly. The new menus serve to further deliver this to all our patients.

Sandy Harvey
Public Governor
6th January 2012