



## **PATIENT INFORMATION**

### **Protected mealtimes - helping our patients to eat their meals Information for patients, visitors and relatives**

#### **What are protected mealtimes?**

They are times set aside solely for patients to eat meals. There are specific times for breakfast, lunch and dinner, where all non-urgent activities on the ward will stop.

#### **When are protected mealtimes?**

Mealtimes will be protected for ½ hour. Patients' protected mealtimes are:

Area	Lunchtime	Evening Meal
Ella Rowcroft, Ainslie, Turner,	12.15	17.45
Louisa Cary	12.15	17.15
Cheetham Hill, Simpson, Midgley, Dunlop	12MD	17.30
Allerton, Cromie, Forrest, Maternity	12.30	18.00
EAU 3 & 4 (Not currently protected)	12.30	18.00

#### **Why are they a good idea?**

Patients prefer eating their meals with fewer distractions on the ward, and without interruptions. In addition, good nutrition and healthy eating is an important factor in helping patients recover from illness or injury.

#### **What do they mean for staff on the ward?**

Protected mealtimes allow nursing staff, healthcare assistants, therapists, volunteers, other ward staff and our caterers to focus on making sure patients receive their meals quickly and that patients who need help to eat get it. They also allow staff to monitor a patient's food intake to ensure they are eating and drinking the appropriate amounts of food and drink.

They will all have the same aim: to help, encourage and monitor the patient's food intake during their mealtime and make it an enjoyable experience.

During protected mealtimes, nursing staff, hotel services staff and therapists will:

- prepare the ward environment for meals, including clearing away clutter and commodes, positioning of patient tables;
- prepare the patient for their meals by ensuring that the required sanitary and hand hygiene needs are met

- ensure patients are positioned safely and comfortably prior to their meals being served
- make sure patients get the correct meal
- assist patients in opening packaging, cutting food and, where necessary, help them to eat and record their nutritional and fluid intake

During mealtimes, routine ward rounds will not take place and nursing staff will not perform routine medicine rounds, as well as non-nutrition related interventions and therapy and the taking of blood.

### **How do protected mealtimes affect hospital staff?**

All staff and volunteers are strongly discouraged from interrupting patients' mealtimes unless absolutely necessary and all non-ward-based clinical staff should leave the ward, unless they are involved in food delivery or patient assessment at mealtime. All non-essential clinical activity will cease, including patients leaving the ward for non-urgent investigations. However, all emergency treatments will still be carried out.

**Missed meals** If you are an inpatient and you miss a meal because you are absent from the ward for a procedure or felt unwell please talk to the nursing staff who will be able to arrange a hot meal or a snack for you.

### **How do protected mealtimes affect visitors and carers?**

During breakfast lunch and teatime, visiting is restricted to those visitors and carers who are actively assisting patients with their meals.

### **Apart from the designated times for meals, is there any other period that patients and visitors should be aware of?**

After lunch, there is a rest period from 1pm - 2pm. During this time, visiting will be restricted and clinical interaction with patients is kept to a minimum to allow patients to rest.

### **What can relatives or visitors do to help?**

If you are visiting a ward please respect the wards protected mealtime and only visit during visiting times. If you normally visit at mealtimes to help your relative or friend eat, or just to give encouragement, we are happy for you to continue to do this. Please ask the nurse in charge how you can help.

If possible, please try to avoid telephoning the ward, or your relative, for information during these times so the staff can concentrate on helping the patients with their meal. Together we can make sure that all our patients are given the appropriate help and the required time to eat and enjoy their meals uninterrupted. This is a key requirement for good nutrition and will help them to recover more quickly.

### **Thank you for your help and support**

Together we can make sure that all our patients are given the appropriate help, and the required time, to eat - and enjoy - their meals uninterrupted. This is a key requirement for good nutrition, and will help them to recover more quickly.