

INTRODUCTION

The aim of **Protected Mealtimes** is to help patients get the most from the food provided. In addition, the ward environment, food presentation, the timing and nutritional content of meals are important elements of good nutritional care.

WHAT IS PROTECTED MEALTIMES?

- This is a period at mealtimes which includes breakfast, lunch and teatime, when all non-urgent activities stop on the ward.
- This is to prevent unnecessary interruptions to mealtimes and enables staff to assist patients with their meals. Please be assured that all essential and urgent care needs will be met. Visiting is restricted unless prior arrangements is made with the nursing staff to assist with feeding.

WHAT CAN RELATIVES OR VISITORS DO TO HELP?

We discourage visiting during mealtimes, therefore if you are visiting a ward displaying the protected mealtime poster, please respect this and try to visit outside the meal times. If you normally visit at mealtimes in order to help or encourage your relative or friend to eat, 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 for information during these times so that staff can concentrate on helping the patients. If you have any questions regarding this, please speak to the nurse in charge. Relatives and friends are encourage

WHAT DOES PROTECTED MAELTIMES MEAN FOR STAFF?

Staff aim to ensure that patients have the best possible mealtime experience and use the following guidelines to guide their practice:

- Staff will ensure that the patients dining area/table will be clear and tidy prior to meal service
- Staff will ensure that who require toileting prior to their meal will be assisted with this
- Patients will be given the opportunity to clean their hands prior to eating
- Patients will be assisted to are seat in the appropriate position for their meal
- Nursing or Healthcare assistance will ensure that patients dentures are fitted correctly and that patients mouths are clean
- Ensure that patient's meal are placed within reach of the independent patients

BLUE APRONS ARE WORN BY STAFF

Staff assisting with Protected Mealtime service are wearing a **Blue Aprons** to identify that they are overseeing the service and to identify that they are assisting patients who need additional support or assistance with eating their meals or having a drink, so they will not be interrupted while doing so.

PROTECTED MEALTIMES



Breakfast 8:00AM - 8:30AM*



Lunch 12:45PM - 1:30PM*



Tea 5:00PM - 5:30PM

***There may be slight variations on some wards (ICU and St. Therese's).**

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE PATIENTS?

Right meal, Right time, Right help

The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) in the UK and The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) identified poor nutrition as a patient safety issue. The protected mealtimes initiative helps improve patient safety by making sure that patients receive the right meal at the right time with the right amount of help

- It creates a more relaxed and calm atmosphere giving patients time to socialise and digest their food.
- More mealtime assistance from nursing and healthcare assistance

MISSED MEALS

If an inpatient misses a meal because they are absent from the ward for a procedure or feeling unwell the nursing staff will be able to arrange a hot meal or an alternative meal for the patient.

BLUE PLATE SYSTEM

The use of the **blue plate** system for meals will identify high priority patients. This is a prompt to staff that these patients may need additional support or assistance with

eating their meals or having a drink, it also highlights to doctors that patients with the blue plate should not be interrupted.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Visiting Times

Daily 14.00 - 16.00 and 18.00 - 20.00

Reception Number: 0909648200

WHO TO CONTACT?

If you have any questions regarding Protected Mealtimes, please speak to the Nurse in charge

PATIENT ADVICE AND LIAISON SERVICE

If you have any concerns or feedback please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0909648200 and ask for bleep 124

DIETITIANS

Dietitians are available through a referral from the ward.

PORTIUNCULA UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL BALLINASLOE



INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS ON PROTECTED MEALTIMES

