Policies and procedures

Food and mealtimes

This audit module is designed to be used when you want to determine how your systems, policies, procedures and processes support the provision of food and drink during and between mealtimes.

It also looks at how the policies and procedures regarding your ward's day to day operation enable an older patient's participation in their care and encourage their family and carer to be included as part of the care team.

You may use this audit module on its own or as part of an audit of other aspects of policy and procedure, or of the physical space.

This audit module contains 12 questions and will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Some questions may not be relevant. Where this is the case, there is an option to select 'not applicable,' however please complete as many questions as possible to conduct a thorough audit.

A notes section is provided underneath each question to record any additional information or prompts for action that you identify while carrying out the audit.

Information, recommendations and suggested strategies to address any issues are provided below each question.

When you have completed the audit, please keep it for your reference. You may wish to use it to create your own action list, or to use the information to educate staff about the role of the environment in patient care.

If you want to audit more than one location, please print a new copy of this module and complete the audit again for the new location.

Name _____　　　　**Date** _____

Hospital _____

Additional information _____

Food and mealtimes

1. Are there policies and procedures in place to ensure that patients who need help with their meals (such as opening packages, cutting up food, eating) are identified and are provided assistance at every meal?

☐　**Yes** - *Correct* - Adequate nutrition and hydration is a crucial part of patient care and all patients must be able to consume every meal.

☐　**No** - Adequate nutrition and hydration is a crucial part of patient care and all patients must be able to consume every meal. Consider putting systems in place to ensure this happens, for example, screening of patients, coloured trays to denote need for assistance, designated staff or volunteers to provide assistance.

☐　**N/A**

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2. Are mealtime programs, for example 'protected mealtimes,' available across wards?

☐　**Yes** - *Correct* - Mealtime programs such as protected mealtimes can assist in organising staff time and patient schedules to minimise disruption to patients during mealtimes and ensure staff focus on them.

☐　**No** - Mealtime programs can assist in organising staff time and patient schedules to minimise disruption to patients during mealtimes and ensure staff focus on them. Consider altering policies and procedures as necessary so that patient appointments, doctor rounds and procedures are not scheduled during mealtimes and that ward staff are allocated to meal assistance only during these times.

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3. Is there an acceptance of family participation during meal times and are they supported to bring food into the hospital from home?

☐ **Yes** - *Correct* - Encouraging family attendance and participation at meal times and bringing food in from home can encourage eating and drinking. It may reduce anxiety through introducing familiarity to the hospital setting. This can be especially important for culturally and linguistically diverse patients who may not be familiar with the meals provided in a hospital setting.

☐ **No** - Encouraging the presence of family at meal times and bringing food in from home can encourage eating and drinking. It may reduce anxiety through introducing familiarity to the hospital setting. This can be especially important for culturally and linguistically diverse patients who may not be familiar with the meals provided in a hospital setting. Consider changing your foodservice polices to ensure that patients have the option to bring in their own food and share a meal with others.

☐ **N/A**

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4. Do your foodservice policies and procedures take into account safe food preparation, handling and storage for meals supplied by the hospital, and food and drink brought in by family and friends?

☐ **Yes** - *Correct* - Food poisoning can be particularly dangerous for older adults; ensure that policies and procedures support safe food practices to avoid this.

☐ **No** - Food poisoning can be particularly dangerous for older adults; ensure that policies support safe food practices to avoid this.

☐ **N/A**

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5. **Do patients, their families and carers have access to hot and cold drinks and snacks as required?**

☐   **Yes** - *Correct* - Ensuring that patients, their families and carers can access beverages, water and snacks between meals increases independence, comfort and wellbeing.

☐   **No** - Ensuring that patients, their families and carers can access beverages, water and snacks between meals increases independence, comfort and wellbeing. Ensure there is access to drinks and food, and that patients and visitors are made aware of their location and availability.

☐   **N/A**

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6. **Is the kitchen area for patients stocked with tea and coffee making items, biscuits, cups, cutlery and plates?**

☐   **Yes** - *Correct* - Access to independent food and drink preparation is important for patient independence and is also important for visitor comfort. Ensure the space is free from clutter such as equipment so that it can be used safely.

☐   **No** - Access to independent food and drink preparation is important for patient independence and is also important for visitor comfort. Ensure the space is free from clutter such as equipment so that it can be used safely. Have a system in place to ensure the kitchen is restocked as necessary.

☐   **N/A**

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7. **Is there a system in place to capture any dietary requirements or restrictions of patients (e.g. vegetarian, Halal) and ensure their meals meet these requirements?**

☐   **Yes** - *Correct* - Foodservice policy should enable meals to be provided to meet specific dietary requirements.

☐   **No** - Foodservice policy should enable meals to be provided to meet specific dietary requirements. Consider altering foodservice policies to ensure patients' dietary requirements are discovered, recorded and catered for.

☐   **N/A**

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8.   Are patients provided with meals that are nutritionally balanced?

☐   **Yes** - *Correct* - Meals should meet healthy eating principles outlined in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and take into account the particular needs of older adults, such as for more protein.

☐   **No** - Meals should meet healthy eating principles outlined in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and take into account the particular needs of older adults, such as for more protein.

☐   **N/A**

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9.   Is the design of cutlery, crockery and other mealtime utensils likely to be familiar to older people?

☐   **Yes** - *Correct* - Familiar designs of cutlery, glassware and crockery assist older people to eat during mealtimes.

☐   **No** - Familiar designs of cutlery, glassware and crockery assist older people to eat during mealtimes.

☐   **N/A**

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10. Does the colour of cutlery, crockery and other mealtime utensils contrast with the colour of the tables and trays?

☐ **Yes** - *Correct* - Plates and utensils that contrast in colour to tables and trays are easier to see.

☐ **No** - Plates and utensils that contrast in colour to tables and trays are easier to see. If you cannot purchase new coloured utensils or trays consider supplying table or tray covers that contrast in colour to existing mealtime utensils.

☐ **N/A**

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11. Is there a communal space to eat away from the bedside/ward area where patients could choose to eat if preferred?

☐ **Yes** - *Correct* - Giving patients the option to eat in a communal dining area can increase opportunity for social interaction, incidental mobilisation, reducing anxiety and increasing the enjoyment of eating. Patients should also have the option to eat alone, if they prefer.

☐ **No** - Giving patients the option to eat in a communal dining area can increase opportunity for social interaction, incidental mobilisation, reducing anxiety and increasing the enjoyment of eating. Patients should also have the option to eat alone, if they prefer. Consider designating a space for communal mealtimes and organising staff to oversee the provision of communal meals.

☐ **N/A**

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12. Do meal and food service policies and procedures encourage a friendly and dignified eating environment?

☐ **Yes** - *Correct* - Policies and procedures should encourage patients to eat at mealtimes. Fostering a friendly service culture that upholds normality and familiarity around eating can support this.

☐ **No** - Policies and procedures should encourage patients to eat at mealtimes. Fostering a friendly service culture that upholds normality and familiarity around eating can support this. Sitting at a table with a knife and fork may be preferable to eating from a tray table for some patients. Eating food that is

familiar and has come from home may also be a preference. Consider policies and procedures that support flexibility, the provision of assistance and the option of interaction during mealtimes.

☐ **N/A**

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