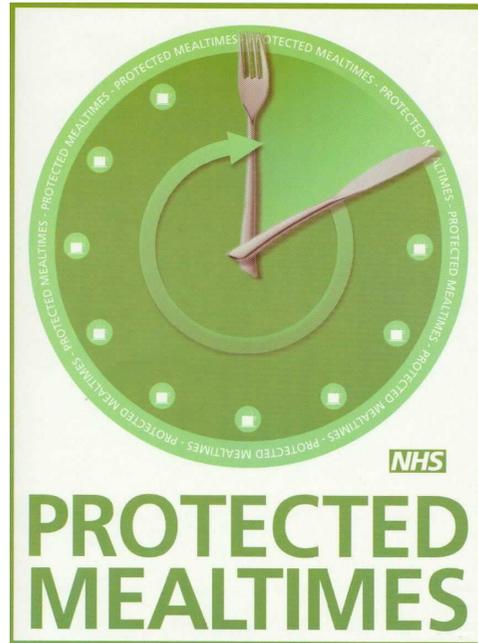




## Protected Mealtimes



## **Introduction**

Recent studies have shown that up to 4 out of 10 patients admitted to hospital are already malnourished. A large number of these patients (7 in 10) become further malnourished during their stay.

There are obviously many reasons why patients do not or cannot eat during their hospital stay. Some patients have said that they were continually interrupted when they were trying to eat their meals.

We have introduced protected mealtimes to give patients the opportunity to eat their meals without any interruptions.

## **What are protected mealtimes?**

This is a period of time over lunch or dinner when all non-urgent clinical activity stops. **You can see the times of meals on the poster at the entrance to the ward.** The nurses, catering staff, volunteers and carers are available to help serve meals and assist patients who may need help.

## **Why are protected mealtimes a good idea?**

- They allow patients to eat their meals in a calm and relaxing environment without unnecessary interruption.
- They allow nursing staff to monitor and help patients to meet their nutritional needs.
- They improve and enhance patients' experience of hospital food.

All members of the healthcare team are responsible for ensuring that patients are able to eat their meals.

## **Who will be on the ward during protected mealtimes?**

As well as patients, the only people on the ward will be the nurses and staff involved with service meals. Their aim is to help encourage and observe patients' food intake during their mealtime and to make it an enjoyable experience.

**All visitors will be asked to leave the ward at mealtimes except carers helping with meals.**

However, all emergency treatments will still be dealt with.

## **How can carers help?**

- If you would like to help feed your relative or friend at mealtimes this would be welcomed by staff.
- Otherwise, please visit your relative or friend at an alternative time to the ward mealtimes.
- If possible, please do not telephone the ward for information during these times, so that the staff can concentrate on helping the patients.
- Visitors can use this time to get refreshments. There is a coffee shop in Oak Road Reception, the Wilmslow Dining Room or local eating places in Didsbury or Withington.

**If you have any worries or concerns about this, then please speak to the nurse in charge.**

**If you need this leaflet in another format please contact the  
Department of Nutrition and Dietetics on 0161 446 3729.**