

Improving Patient Dining Satisfaction: Positively Changing the Perception of Hospital Food

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Purpose: Implement a new food service dining model for long-stay patients in the acute care environment with a variety of quality nutritional and delicious choices that enhance the patient dining experience.

Summary Content: This project provides the results of implementing a variety driven two-week menu cycle, cook serve method with same day bedside meal selections.

Systematic Approach Used: The new food service model was implemented (n=100) with patients on rehabilitation units at an acute care facility in Burlington, ON. Pre and post tray waste audits and patient satisfaction surveys were conducted with patients to evaluate current baseline status of the patient dining experience to compare to the new model. Baseline model was a one-week menu cycle, fresh steam-cooked food system with same day bedside meal selections.

Conclusions: Eight indicators measured around patient satisfaction. Overall meal satisfaction increased by 16%. All days of menu cycle around patient tray waste was collected. Average daily tray waste decreased by 15%. The performance measurements reflect that the new food service model is successful in enhancing the patient dining experience as evident by increased patient satisfaction and meal consumption.

Recommendations: Providing menu cycles longer than one week and providing patients with a variety of flavourful choices as close as possible to mealtimes should be best practice for improved meal consumption, decreased waste, and increased overall patient satisfaction.

Significance to the Field of Dietetics: Patient dining is complex with multiple allergy and diet orders. Taking a culinary approach that mirrors nutrition and flavor is key to create menus that are flavourful and meet diet restrictions. This project provides insight on how to apply these principles and implement a new food service model in healthcare that directly applies patient needs and experiences.

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