

The ACI Nutrition Standards for Consumers of Inpatient Mental Health Services in NSW

A GUIDE FOR CONSUMERS AND FAMILIES

Changes for better food and nutrition standards

Providing nutritious food is an important part of caring for people who are staying in mental health hospital units.

Who doesn't want food that is tasty, appealing, healthy and nutritious and a menu that offers variety and choice? The new *Nutrition Standards for Consumers of Inpatient Mental Health Services in NSW* are based on nutrition requirements and feedback provided by consumers and staff.

Why is good food important?

Good food is vital to enjoying life, improving physical health and preventing chronic disease which is a risk for some people with a mental illness. There may be co-existing health conditions, such as metabolic syndrome and/or side-effects of medication such as hunger and weight gain.

What are the Nutrition Standards?

New Nutrition Standards are here to guide mental health hospital services to plan menus and meals to meet consumer needs and preferences. The food provided is designed to promote health and healthy eating during and after a hospital stay.

This means:

- The general menu must provide adequate energy and nutrients. This includes 8000kJ (1,900 calories), 90g protein and 30g of fibre per day.
- You might see some changes to the menu when the standards are introduced:
 - Different choices at main meals – hot dishes, salads and sandwiches
 - 3 serves of fruit per day and 2 different vegetables with a hot meal
 - 1 low Glycaemic Index (GI) food per meal (e.g. multigrain bread)
 - High fibre breakfast cereals and breads
 - 1 protein food at breakfast (e.g. an egg, yoghurt, or baked beans)
 - Desserts each day
 - Hot drinks at least 4 times per day.

Please note – these standards may not meet the needs of people with anorexia nervosa and other types of eating disorders

Further information

NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI)
Phone (02) 9464 4666
<http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Official Visitors Program
Phone 1800 208 218
<http://www.ovmh.nsw.gov.au/>

Australian Dietary Guidelines
(National Health and Medical Research Council – NHMRC)
Phone (02) 6217 9466
<http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>

Health Care Telephone Interpreter service
Phone 131 450



Frequently asked questions

Can I ask for a special diet?

Yes. If you need vegetarian, vegan, halal, or kosher food, ask your *treating team** to arrange this for you.

Can my family or friends bring food for me?

Check with your treating team if this is possible, especially if you are on a special diet, and about how to keep food safe. *See the factsheet - Guidelines for bringing occasional food to patients*

Can I have seconds?

Providing extra serves depends on how much food is available for all and whether you are on a special diet. If you are still hungry after your meals speak to your treating team.

Can I have a specific diet if my medical condition requires it?

Yes. Speak to your treating team if you need a specific diet(s) such as diabetic, gluten free, or lactose free.

Can someone explain metabolic syndrome to me?

Yes. Ask your treating team for more details, but briefly it means having several health risks at once, such as increased weight, high blood pressure, abnormal blood fats and/or glucose.

Can I see a Dietitian about my diet?

Ask your treating team if this can be arranged for you.

I have trouble swallowing.
Can I get help with this?

Yes. Talk to your treating team, they can help you with suitable meals and may arrange for you to see a Speech Pathologist.

I might have trouble eating my meals.
Can I get help with this?

Yes. Please ask if you need help such as opening packages or cutting up meat.

Can I skip meals?

Talk with your treating team if you have lost your appetite, feel unwell or are skipping meals regularly.

Can I have an alternative food if there is one I dislike?

There are different menu choices. Tell your treating team if there is a particular food you dislike.

Why are some fruit and vegetables not offered on the menu?

Some foods are not available due to food safety regulations. Please ask your treating team if you have any questions.

If you have any more questions or concerns please speak with your treating team or an Official Visitor.

**Treating team = the team of health professionals who are responsible for your care during your admission*