

Mealtimes matter

Protected mealtimes

Information for patients

The aim of protected mealtimes is to provide an environment that allows patients to eat their meals without unnecessary interruption and to allow the staff to focus on assisting patients during the mealtime.

10 key points

1. Protected mealtimes take place between:
 - 8am to 9am
 - Midday to 1pm
 - 5pm to 6pm
2. We will ensure that the environment is conducive to eating and drinking and is welcoming, clean and tidy. For example, bedside tables will be cleared and commodes and urinals will be removed.
3. Staff will ensure that patients are positioned appropriately and safely, sitting at a table if possible.
4. Visiting is restricted during this period, with the exception of those carers that assist in feeding and supervising patients at mealtimes.
5. Where possible patients will not leave the ward for non-urgent investigations.
6. Routine ward rounds will not take place during the protected mealtimes and an order agreed for those patients who do need to be seen during mealtimes.
7. Nursing staff should not perform routine medicine rounds during the protected mealtimes.
8. All non-essential clinical activity will stop during the protected mealtimes. **All essential and urgent care needs can still be met.**
9. Nursing staff or volunteers will provide assistance in the meal delivery service and **nursing staff will complete food charts before the meal is cleared away.**
10. Every effort will be made to make mealtimes an enjoyable and nutritionally successful experience for patients. Patients are able to focus on eating their meals at their own pace and then rest afterwards, placing food first at mealtimes.

Activity at the bedside during protected mealtimes should be reduced and, where possible, there should be a multidisciplinary team approach to maintaining a quiet environment throughout the ward.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS:

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net

You can also contact us by using our online form at **www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals**

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: 01689 863252

Email: kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.