

BRINGING FOOD INTO HOSPITAL

The Trust has a legal obligation to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Act 1990 and Food Safety Regulations relating to the composition, labelling, safety, handling, control and hygiene of food.

The patient' meals we serve are carefully prepared and designed to offer patients a healthy balanced diet of set selected menus with a range of hot and cold food and drinks. Patients are encouraged to select a healthy and safe food choice with appropriate advice given where required by dieticians.

We have an obligation to ensure that any foods brought into the hospitals are suitable and do not include any illicit or unauthorised items. This helps us to prevent or reduce the risk of infection, food poisoning and food borne illnesses and unwanted interaction with prescribed medication. We also have a legal obligation to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the patients who are allergy sufferers, are not comprised by people bringing in allergenic items onto the ward.

Any food brought in should be suitable for the dietary needs of the patient. Visitors are asked to help us to help patients by only bringing in food that contributes to a healthy balanced diet. Any advice regarding the suitability of foods can be obtained from the nurse in charge or a dietitian.

Guidelines to reduce the risk associated with food brought into the hospitals are identified below:

Permitted foods	Prohibited foods
Where a patient is not on a therapeutic diet	These foods CANNOT be brought in as they are high risk allergens or support the growth of pathogenic bacteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual cartons / plastic bottles of fresh fruit juice and squashes • Pre-wrapped fresh & dried fruit • Pre-wrapped chocolates or sweets • Pre-wrapped biscuits, crackers and cakes (no fresh or artificial cream) • Individual packets of crisps, popcorn, pretzels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peanuts, nuts, cereals and cereal bars • Cooked meat, raw meat and meat products. • Fish paste and fish products eg sushi • Fresh or synthetic cream or cream products e.g. mousse custards, yoghurts, cakes and ice cream

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserves e.g. jam, marmalade, honey, marmite and bovril 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-wrapped sandwiches (all fillings) • Alcohol and all foods containing alcohol • Take-away meals • High risk food requiring refrigeration • Food requiring re-heating
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All food to be consumed within 24 hours.

Items containing nuts and raw meats, raw fish, raw poultry will not be allowed. Should patients or their relatives still wish to bring other discouraged food, special permission from the nurse-in-charge on the ward must be sought and documented in the patient's notes, then the food should be eaten immediately after opening the packaging by the person for whom it is intended and any containers should be taken home.

If food is considered unsuitable by the nurse in charge, the patient and visitor should be made aware of this fact and discouraged from eating the food. This advice should be documented in the patient's notes.

If a patient or their relative insists on bringing a chilled meal then the relatives should be advised that there are no re-heating facilities for patient's brought in meals. The microwave in the ward kitchen cannot be used by patients or relatives. Ward Operatives are not able to handle or re-heat brought in ready meals.

If nursing staff are aware that patients have consumed ready meals brought in by visitors, details of the date and time of consumption should be documented in the patient's notes. This is to allow a food history to be taken should a patient suffer from symptoms of food poisoning.

There are no designated refrigeration facilities for storing patient's brought-in items in the kitchens. Anything which has been allowed by the nurse in charge on the ward as exception must be kept to a minimum. **Only permitted special items for meeting patient's dietary needs and intended to be eaten chilled would be kept. Ambient items should be kept in patient's allocated storage by their beds.**

FOOD SHOULD

- Be pre-packed
- Be brought in a clean, lidded plastic container. (No plastic bags, foil wraps, carrier bags to be placed in the refrigerator.)
- Be labelled with patient's name and the date.
- Be consumed within 24 hours.

On no account should patients or visitors have access to ward kitchens.

If patients are taken out for lunch this should also be recorded in the patient's notes.