Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust believe that every meal time should be a safe experience that enhances the quality of patients’ care. Meal times should be a positive experience for patients, their relatives, carers and staff.

The Project

The Right Meal, Right Time, Right Help project aimed to provide patient focused meal times. The team agreed and collected baseline data using a measurement tool. They observed patient meal times for a week, talked to staff and patients to identify good practice and shared ideas for improvement.

The team introduced a series of changes. Meal mats were brought in to ensure patient areas were kept clear for their meal tray and to ensure easy access to food. Patients were also offered a variety of drinks and snacks throughout the day. Visitors were encouraged to support meal times and join patients for their meals and assist where necessary. Staff encouraged the use of own foods where appropriate to meet patient preferences.

Staff also displayed informative posters on the walls for residents and visitors. See example below.
The Benefits

The project has seen improvements in patient experience, safety and efficiency of care. There is more time for nurses to spend with patients. The meal mats save approximately 10 hours of nursing care time each week which can be spent directly on patients. The project has also delivered improved ward productivity and better teamwork with organised meal times and improved information for patients, carers and staff.

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