



Red mats, jug lids and glasses making a difference



Background

At the Queen Elizabeth Hospital some patients at high/moderate risk of malnutrition/dehydration were having their plates and cups removed at mealtimes before they had finished their meal.



Objectives

- To develop a system whereby those patients identified as being at high/moderate risk of malnutrition/dehydration are given as much time as is needed for them to eat their meal.
- To ensure nursing staff record food and drink intake for patients identified as being at high/moderate risk of malnutrition/dehydration and assess further needs where appropriate.



Approach

- At mealtimes food is served on a red mat for those patients identified as being at high/moderate risk of malnutrition/dehydration.
- Red jug lids/glasses are used to identify patients at risk of dehydration or in need of assistance.



Outcomes

The red mat, jug lid/glasses provides a visual message to staff:

- to give the patient as much time as is needed for them to eat their meal, even if this is considerably longer than for other patients,
- that the patient may need encouragement/support with their meal,
- that the food record chart needs to be completed so a patient's food and drink intake can be assessed during their time in hospital,
- that if food and drink intake is poor next steps should be considered.