

A guide to the types of food you can bring into hospital for patients

Inpatient Catering Services

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Nutritious food is very important for all patients in hospital. It helps recovery.

Before you are admitted to hospital or as soon as you are on the ward let the ward team know if you

- have any concerns about your nutrition
- cannot find anything suitable to eat
- have specific dietary requirements (including cultural, religious or medical)

The patient meals served every day are carefully made. They offer a balanced choice.

There are a range of menus available. These aim to meet varying needs.

There are hot and cold food and drinks to choose from.

All these menus are coded to help guide meal and snack choice. See the symbols here:.

We know that sometimes patients would like food to be brought in by friends or relatives. But we have a duty to make sure that any food brought into hospital is suitable and safe. It must meet with the Food Safety Act 1990.

This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions you may have.

Menu Codes

The following symbols can be used to help guide choice if you have specific dietary requirements

- ♥ **Healthier Choice.** These dishes are lower in fat, salt and/or sugar
- ⬆ **Higher Energy.** These dishes are particularly high in calories.
- ⬆ **Higher Protein.** These dishes are particularly high in protein.
- ⚙ **Easy to Chew.** These Meals are tender and easier to chew and can be cut with the side of a fork or spoon.
- 🌱 **Vegetarian.** These dishes are suitable for vegetarians.
- 🌾 **Gluten Free.** These dishes do not contain any gluten containing ingredients and dishes contain less than 20ppm of gluten.
- 🍵 **Neutropenic.** These meals are suitable for those who require a neutropenic diet.
- 🔥 **Medium Hot Meal.**

If you need help to open food packaging, please ask a member of staff, who will be happy to assist you.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Is the food brought in suitable for the patients medical condition?

You need to think about many things when thinking about what food to bring into hospital.

The patient's medical needs

They may need to follow a special diet. Please ask staff to make sure you have all the information about this. For example, some patients may have swallowing problems. They may need special meals that are softer and thickened drinks. We must follow these recommendations to avoid a choking risk. The speech and language therapist can give you more information.

Is the food brought in safe, mainly for those with higher risk of infections?

Food poisoning is caused by germs from food that has been poorly handled, stored or cooked. Signs of food poisoning may include

- feeling or being sick
- stomach pains
- diarrhoea
- fever
- headache

People who are ill and in hospital have a weakened immune system. This means they are at higher risk from food poisoning. They may have more severe symptoms.

Germs will grow and multiply in some types of food more easily than others.

When food is left at room temperature, the amount of germs can quickly rise.

Food you bring into hospital spends more time out of the fridge. This means it is riskier than eating the same meal at home.

Top tips to lower the risk of food poisoning from food brought into hospital

- Talk to the ward nurse about foods you bring in. Make sure the food is right for the patient and checked
- Do not bring raw meats, raw fish, raw eggs and raw unwashed vegetables onto the ward
- If possible, high risk chilled products such as sandwiches should not be brought in to hospital (see lists on the next pages)
- If you bring in chilled foods, they must be put in in a cool bag with ice packs. These foods should be stored at a constant below 5°C temperature
- Chilled food that is not eaten right away can be stored in a ward fridge for 24 hours. **It must then be thrown away.** Ward fridge space is limited. We cannot guarantee space.

- Only 1 meal or item should be brought in at a time.
- Hot foods must be kept above 63°C for example, in a food flask. **It cannot be cooked or reheated** on the ward.
- **Please note** ward staff cannot accept food beyond the 'best before date'
- Make sure food is in a suitable container. You must label it with the patient name and date it
- Home prepared food must be eaten on the day it is brought into hospital
- Please do not share food with other patients

Ward staff will record in the nursing notes foods and meals brought in by visitors. We will record details of the date and time of eating. This means we have a food history. We can keep track of the patient's appetite and what they eat and drink. We can also find out the cause if a patient has symptoms of food poisoning.

Hospital restaurants

Leicester's Hospitals have a restaurant on each site. You can buy food and drinks.

These are open 7 days a week at the following times:

Leicester Royal Infirmary: 24 hours

Glenfield Hospital: from 7am to 7pm

Leicester General Hospital: from 7am to 7pm

Foods you may bring into hospital

These are foods which are stored at room temperature or on the supermarket shelf.

Foods that are safe to bring in for patients

- Wrapped fresh fruit, for example, grapes, plums, pears and/or
- Fruit with skin on for peeling, for example, bananas, satsumas
- Dried fruit for example, raisins, dates
- Pre-wrapped nuts and seeds
- Bottled drinks for example, fruit squashes, cordials or fizzy drinks, small cartons of fruit juice or smoothies
- Pre-wrapped cakes (not cream), biscuits, flapjacks, shortbread
- Pre-wrapped chocolate bars, cereal bars, muesli bars, sweets
- Small boxes of favourite breakfast cereal
- Individual portions of sweet or savoury spread for example, jam, marmalade, honey or yeast extract such as Marmite or Bovril
- Crispbreads, crackers, savoury biscuits, cheese straws, breadsticks
- Individual packets of crisps or savoury snacks for example, Bombay mix, popcorn, pretzels, twiglets or tortilla chips
- Pre-packed bread, bagels, muffins, plain cakes, tea cakes, pancakes and scones
- Long life drink products for example, UHT milk based drinks, milk shake type drinks
- Long life pudding pots for example, UHT rice puddings, UHT custards, Jellies, UHT soya puddings

We cannot accept responsibility for the safety of food prepared outside of the hospital and given to patients.



Please do not bring in any of the following foods

High risk foods support the growth of germs. They have a higher risk of food poisoning.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) did a survey. It found that 60% of food poisonings were linked to takeaway restaurants and small food outlets.

Please do not bring in any of the following foods:

Food that we do not recommend bringing in:

- Raw and cooked meat and poultry for example chicken, ham, beef, corned beef, smoked meat, salami
- Foods with cooked meat, for example, sausage rolls, pate, scotch eggs, pasties and meat pies
- Dairy produce, for example, yoghurt, mousse, custard, milk and cream or cream products for example, trifles, cream cakes unless long life
- Shellfish for example, cooked prawns in prawn cocktail
- Pre-packed sandwiches (all filling types)
- Cold rice and pasta for example, rice or pasta salads
- Food eaten raw, for example, sushi
- Raw eggs, cooked eggs and egg products
- Unpasteurised milk and milk products for example, soft unpasteurised cheese and blue cheeses, yoghurt
- Unwashed fruit, salad and vegetables
- Ice cream
- Takeaway meals for example, pizza, beef burgers, kebabs, curry, Chinese meals

Ward staff cannot re-heat food brought in to hospital.

If you have any further queries during your hospital stay ask the ward staff to contact Patient Catering Services who will come and speak to you

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Contact details

If you need more information please speak to the ward staff. They can contact the best person to answer your query. Or please contact the patient catering team.

Leicester Royal Infirmary 0116 258 6658

Leicester General Hospital 0116 258 4364

Glenfield Hospital 0116 25 63941

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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