

## MEAL SUPPORT DO'S AND DON'TS

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay calm</li> <li>• Be warm, supportive and consistent</li> <li>• Acknowledge the effort patient is making</li> <li>• Encourage normal eating behaviour</li> <li>• Chat about television, music, the news, the weather etc.</li> <li>• Ask about hobbies/ pets/ interests</li> <li>• Ask what they did before current difficulties and what they want to do in the future, what jobs they are interested in etc.</li> <li>• Assert gently that you won't make comments on their appearance, shape, size as this isn't helpful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have discussions about food or calories or weight gain/loss</li> <li>• Talk about weight loss diets or body image/shapes</li> <li>• Discuss sensitive therapy issues</li> <li>• Offer praise for eating e.g. "well done!" (unless you know they find this helpful.)</li> <li>• Don't say "Eat it for me", "surely you can eat that last bit"</li> <li>• Make critical or hostile comments e.g. "Think of the starving children in Africa"</li> <li>• Lecture on the dangers of eating disorders</li> </ul>

### Helpful things to say when a person is struggling to eat

"I am going to sit here and help"

"I can see how difficult this is for you but you need to eat this meal"

"Let's not let the eating disorder win"

"You are a strong person, I respect you for that"

"I am impressed by your courage in fighting back against the eating disorder"

"Think of food as medicine which your body needs"

"Eating this one meal will not cause rapid weight gain"

"Eat your peas/potatoes etc. next"

"Remember it is normal to eat and your body needs it. Food is fuel"

"The Team have told me I should not enter into long discussions about food or comment about your appearance"

"I can see you're hiding your (apple, fruit, bread etc) under the table, leave it uncovered. Try and tell me what you're having trouble with..."

"Can you tell me what the eating disorder is saying?"

**And Finally...** Meal support can be difficult. It can bring up strong emotions and be extremely stressful. You might want to talk over how the meal experience was for you afterwards or write something down to share at a later date. Be kind to yourself and ask for support if you need it.

## MEAL SUPPORT GUIDELINES

### Before the meal

Please encourage to use the toilet

Staff must check the meal plan before EVERY meal and snack.

All food on the meal plan must be provided by hospital catering, patients can have their own food but as an extra to the meal plan.

Once a food choice is made it cannot be swapped.

A glass of fluid must be taken with each meal unless otherwise stated on meal plan.

Check specific care plans in case there are any extra boundaries e.g. tying up hair, rolling back sleeves due to concerns about food concealment.

### During the meal

Sit out in their chair for the duration of the meal.

Must complete their food within the following time limits:

- 30 minutes for breakfast, main meal and light meal
- 15 minutes for dessert
- 15 minutes for snack

If the food is not completed within the time limit a supplement drink may be prescribed if part of the care plan at the end of the meal. Volume is stated on the meal plan. General guidance

- If 50% or less of the meal is completed the full supplement volume should be given
- If 50-99% of the meal is completed then half the supplement volume should be offered (volume is written in brackets on the meal plan).

For a main meal to be more than 50% complete, this must include all 3 parts of the meal i.e. the protein (meat, fish etc), carbohydrate (potatoes, pasta etc) and veg.

No excessive use of condiments e.g. salt, pepper, spices

### After the meal

Patient needs to rest after food intake

- 1 hour after breakfast, light meal and main meal
- 30 minutes after snack

They should be encouraged to relax and remain seated in their chair for the duration of this time or lie on their bed. Standing is not acceptable except to walk to a planned activity as below. Offer distractions and remind them you are there to support them.