

The Red Tray System

(See Policy for monitoring food and fluid intake for adult in-patients)

What is the red tray system?

A system to ensure patients who are at risk of undernutrition are identified & supported. These patients have their meals served on a red tray & their water in a jug with a red lid. On some wards a symbol by the patients name is used instead.

Why use it?

Many patients are at risk of not eating or drinking enough, this can lead to dehydration, weight loss, risk of pressure ulcers, infections & longer hospital stays. We all have a duty of care to prevent this and ensure patients are well fed and hydrated.

When should it be used?

For all patients on admission to determine how well they are eating or drinking – if there are no concerns after 3 days stop using. Keep using or start using again for any patients who have a poor intake, require assistance, have a modified texture diet, have thickened fluids, are on supplements or are moving from tube feeding to oral feeding.



Who's responsibility is it?

Everybody's! Nursing staff should identify when patients need to start & stop the red tray system, & update nutrition & hydration care plans & screening tools. They should also ensure staff are available to assist patients with eating and drinking & completing food and fluid charts. All staff who serve meals, snacks & drinks need to ensure red trays & jug lids are used if indicated.

