

Higher Quality Low Bacteria Trays

The Problem

A Low Bacteria diet is typically indicated after a patient undergoes a bone marrow transplant. In efforts to reduce microbes, patient meals were sent on disposable trays with all paper/plastic materials and food variety was very limited, including mostly single serving packaged goods. Trays were also left at the nursing station for their individual nurses to deliver, so that patients would have limited exposure to others. Unfortunately, this created a theoretically safe, but unsatisfying experience.

The variety and quality of the food served was limited, the timeliness of service was inconsistent and above all, the satisfaction of the patients on the oncology floors as seen by Press Ganey surveys was the lowest scoring unit.

Aim/Goal

Within nine months, the Food Service, Clinical Nutrition and Nursing Staff aimed to increase patient satisfaction (as measured by Press Ganey) by 5 points via efforts to:

1. Increase patient choice by 10%, offering more variety in food selection.
2. Improve the temperature of food upon delivery by serving on ceramic plates with domed lids and having Food Service employees wear precaution gear to deliver trays directly to patients' room instead of nursing station.
3. Increase courtesy scores by enabling patient and staff interaction.

The Team

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The Interventions

- Measured current Low Bacteria diet frequency and collect test tray data
- Researched current best practice methods, which did not include disposables
- Solicited input from patients, colleagues, and tested potential solutions
- Hot foods kept within proper temperatures and those cooked to order included
- Trained tray-line, production, delivery, nursing and management staff
- Implemented new process/protocol, including internal communications
- On-going performance measurement and monitoring via anecdotal feedback and Press Ganey scores

The Results/Progress to Date

Press Ganey score impact from April (pilot) to December 2013:

- Increased patient choice by 17% with hot foods and smoothies.
- Overall Food Service Experience increased by 7.6 points
- Food Temperature increased by 14.6 points as a result of trays being delivered on plastic and ceramic instead of disposable ware, directly to patient rooms instead of the nursing station, which would prolong delivery by up to 60 minutes.
- Food Service Courtesy score increased by 2.5 points as a result of Food Service employees delivering directly to patients vs. leaving trays at RN station.
- Food Quality score increased by 7.9 points as a result of switching from pre-packaged foods to cooked foods.



Old Low Bacteria Tray



New Low Bacteria Tray

Lessons Learned

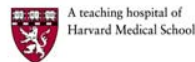
- Saved on average \$0.50 per patient tray with new menu changes along with varying amounts of waste (reusable wares versus disposables).
- Added high protein smoothie menu insert to low bacteria menus as result of monitoring patient feedback on food/menu changes to help with the healing.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Continue to monitor patient feedback on this unit, update custom offerings as needed.
- Continue to follow medical nutrition therapy trends for oncology population, adjust food options and menu as needed.



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