Hospital Nutritional Care Pathway

Protocol

This protocol gives guidance for the use of the Hospital Nutrition Care Pathway and has been developed within the context of the NICE Guidelines on Nutrition Support in Adults. It describes the pathway for the nutrition screening of patients on admission to and throughout their hospital admission.

Within 24 hours of admission to hospital all patients should be weighed and screened for malnutrition or at risk of malnutrition using a validated nutritional screening tool.

Patients identified with swallowing difficulties should be referred for formal assessment by a Speech and Language Therapist. A referral to a Dietician should be made if advice on a textured modified diet or artificial nutritional support is required. In patients where enteral nutrition is contra-indicated total parenteral nutrition should be considered.

When a nutrition risk score and weight has been established a multi-professional nutrition care plan should be implemented. The care plan developed will depend on the nutrition risk score.

Low Risk

Those patients identified as low risk should be screened for malnutrition and weighed on a weekly basis by nursing staff throughout their hospital admission.

Moderate Risk

Those patients identified as moderate risk should be commenced on a fortified/high protein diet. The catering service should be informed of this by the nursing staff. Patients at moderate risk of malnutrition should be assisted with food choices, their feeding needs and be encouraged with milky drinks and snacks between meals. All food consumed should be recorded on a food record chart.

Those patients at moderate risk should be screened by nursing staff in 2-3 days. Nutrition care plans should be updated depending on the new nutrition risk score.

High Risk

Those patients identified as high risk should be referred to the Dietician. Patients should be commenced on a fortified/high protein diet until reviewed by a Dietician. The catering service should be informed of this diet by the nursing staff. Unless contra-indicated and in accordance with local policy patients should be commenced on appropriate nutritional supplements/sip feeds. Patients should be assisted with food choices, their feeding needs and
be encouraged with milky drinks and snacks between meals. All food consumed should be recorded on a food record chart which will be reviewed by the Dietician on assessment.

Once reviewed by the Dietician the new-updated care plan should be commenced. Patient at high risk of malnutrition should be screened daily or 2-3 days dependent on local policy and will be under the direct care of the Dietician.

When all patients achieve their target nutrition goals, they will be discharged from the Dietician and enter the consumption stage of the “Patients ready to be served”.

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL Nil By Mouth patients (up to 24hrs) will require Medical Review + Treatment Plan within 5 days’**