

# Press Release



## For immediate release

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## **British Dietetic Association launches updated guidance around the provision of hospital food**

At an event in central London yesterday, the British Dietetic Association Food Services specialist group launched the second edition of the *Nutrition and Hydration Digest*. The significantly revised and updated document builds on the success of the first Digest, and will replace it as one of the five key documents forming national hospital food standards in England.

Key changes to the document include updated references and recommendations including information about the latest Hospital Food Standards and working as the 'Power of Three'. It also features a new chapter about Health and Wellbeing for staff and visitors in the NHS, reflecting new requirements and standards.

Advice on special diets has been significantly extended, including more information about diets for cultural and religious reasons, and new information about specialist diets including Low FODMAP.

There has also been a general reordering and streamlining of some areas to give the document a logical flow and reduce repetition, as well as a professional design and format to make the document easy to both read and navigate.

“Good nutrition and hydration are essential for patients in hospital” said dietitian Helen Ream, who led on the update of the guidance. “The newly updated Digest clearly sets out how hospitals should go about ensuring they can provide appetising and nutritious food for patients. At its heart, it recognises that food that isn’t eaten has no nutritional value, so it is important that hospitals invest properly in their nutrition and hydration services, including ensuring that dietitians have a central role.”

Currently, just over half of hospitals in England are fully complying with the guidance set out within the Digest, with most working towards full compliance. The BDA will continue to work with the Hospital Catering Association and others to ensure that this

guidance is eventually followed in all hospitals, to ensure patients receive the best nutritional care.

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For more information / interview requests, please contact the BDA Press Office on:

**0800 048 1714**

### Notes to the Editor:

- [The complete Nutrition and Hydration Digest document can be downloaded here.](#)
- The Nutrition and Hydration Digest are one of five documents that form Hospital Food Standards in England. The other four standards are
  - The 10 key characteristics of good nutrition and hydration care
  - Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool or equivalent validated nutrition screening tool
  - Healthier and More Sustainable Catering – Nutrition Principles (This relates specifically to staff and visitor catering.)
  - Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering ServicesFrom April 2015, all five standards have been included in the NHS Standard Contract and thus are legally binding.
- Dietitians are the only qualified health professionals that assess, diagnose and treat diet and nutrition problems at an individual and wider public health level. Uniquely, dietitians use the most up to date public health and scientific research on food, health and disease, which they translate into practical guidance to enable people to make appropriate lifestyle and food choices.
- Dietitians are the only nutrition professionals to be statutorily regulated, and governed by an ethical code, to ensure that they always work to the highest standard. Dietitians work in the NHS, private practice, industry, education, research, sport, media, public relations, publishing, non-government organisations and government. Their advice influences food and health policy across the spectrum from government, local communities and individuals.