Going a bit further to care for our patients

Ward 5E at University Hospital Crosshouse is taking part in a pilot which aims to improve patients' wellbeing once they return home. The pilot now sees some patients being offered care packages of food items to take home when they are discharged from hospital.

For the first time in Ayrshire, the ward which cares for older people is offering patients who have been in hospital for more than 48 hours and who may not have family and friends at home, ‘food-to-go bags’.

As part of the discharge planning process, ward staff assess whether their patients would benefit from a ‘food-to-go’ bag. Two types of bag are available. Type one is designed to meet the patient’s immediate needs with type two containing basic supplies to last a few days. Depending on the individual’s circumstances, patients may receive one or both bags.

‘Food-to-go bag’ one includes items such as: a choice of sandwiches; low sugar juice or semi skimmed milk; a packet of biscuits; a piece of fruit; and yoghurt.

‘Food-to-go bag’ two contains items such as: white or wholemeal bread; butter; low fat spread; strawberry or raspberry jam; semi skimmed milk; a packet of cereal; tea bags; sachets of coffee; sugar or sweeteners; a packet of biscuits; a tin of soup; a sachet of porridge; and a sachet of drinking chocolate.

Andrew Moore, Assistant Nurse Director for Quality Improvement and Governance, comments: “When a patient is due to be discharged from hospital, we know it can be difficult to arrange for shopping in advance of going home or when family or friends do not live close by. It can also take some time for homecare services to start up again."
We have been doing a lot of work to improve our processes for discharging patients as soon as they are well enough to leave hospital. This includes discharging patients in the morning rather than waiting until late afternoon or early evenings.

Not having access to basic food items can impact on a person’s wellbeing, especially at a time when they are not perhaps at their strongest. For some patients, a ‘food-to-go’ bag allows them to have something to eat and drink until their home carer visit re-start.

Suzanne Kean, Dietetic Team Lead for University Hospital Crosshouse, explains: “Each ‘food-to-go’ bag can be tailored to each individual patient, based on their needs. Some of our patients will have different dietary requirements, and this is taken into account when choosing the food to include in the package.”

Mr Moore adds: “We are offering these packages to our patients and will evaluate the effectiveness of them. If they prove, as we hope they do, effective in helping to improve our patient’s wellbeing then we will consider this to be a success and will look to extend this to other wards and hospitals.”

Ends

Date of release: Friday 27 November 2015

Photograph:
Food-to-go bags are proving a hit with our patients
Left to right
Robert McLaughlin (Catering Manager); Rosalynn Britten (Dietetic Support Worker); Caroline Ewing (Nursing Assistant); Lynsey McCluskey (Staff Nurse)
With patient Margaret Dobbins (82).

For further media enquiries about this topic, please contact:

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