



# Food Service Guidelines for Hostels

## 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The following guidelines address the service of healthy food in psychiatric hostels to support and promote positive physical health. The guidelines have been developed as part of the HealthRight Project to assist kitchen staff working in psychiatric hostels to produce healthy, nutritious meals for hostel residents.

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Duty to Care Report (2001) provided evidence that in Western Australia people with mental illness had poorer physical health than the general population. More specifically, the authors reported that the problem of nutritional deficiencies and deficiency anaemias was particularly concentrated among people with psychoses and residents of psychiatric hostels.

In response to the findings of the Duty to Care Report, the HealthRight Advisory Group was established, and made recommendations for targeted health promotion strategies such as 'fostering health promoting services', for example, 'healthy nutritional advice is reflected in the serving of healthy meals in the hospital, hostel or drop-in / living skills centres.' (Who is Your GP report: Office of Mental Health, 2004, Page 9))

With these research findings and recommendations in mind, the HealthRight Healthy Lifestyles Program was developed to work with staff in psychiatric hostels in addressing health and lifestyle issues. This pilot project aimed to contribute to the creation of living environments that supported improvements in the physical health of residents through structural change and building individual skills and health promotion capacity.

The Healthy Lifestyles Program involved weekly visits by a nutritionist to three Perth metropolitan hostels over a 20 week period. Strategies included:

- A needs assessment to gather information about current menus, eating habits, resident activity levels and willingness to change.
- The development and implementation of a program for residents which included: education on physical activity and healthy eating; regular weigh- ins and planting and tending a herb garden.
- The development and implementation of a program for kitchen staff which included designing new menu options to reduce portions, sugar and fats and processed foods. Practical nutrition guidelines were developed in the process which included: reducing meat and poultry; increasing vegetables and salad; eliminating refined cereals; introducing wholegrain breads; reducing sweet snacks and desserts. These guidelines are outlined below.

### Current Food Service Guidelines for licensed private psychiatric hostels in WA

In Western Australia, licensed private psychiatric hostels must meet the requirements of the Hospitals and Health Services Act 1927 (the Act) and the Hospitals (Licensing and Conduct of Private Psychiatric Hostels) Regulations 1997.

These regulations , relating to food preparation and diet include that menus must adequately provide dietary allowances recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council and that residents should receive fresh fruit or fruit juice daily.



## Food Service Guidelines for Hostels

The guidelines outlined below support the National Health and Medical Research Council Nutrition Guidelines and also promote the Health Options WA: Food and Nutrition Policy for WA Health. The 'traffic light' colour system is a widely adopted criterion in Australian school canteens and government departments to categorise foods and make healthy food choice simpler.

### 3. GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY FOOD SERVICE

#### Include

1. Choose low fat options where possible, particularly with milk and cheese.
2. Offer yoghurt with fruit for dessert or as a snack
3. Make fresh fruit available 2 or 3 times a day either in a fruit bowl or chopped up as a sweet/snack.
4. Offer wholegrain or wholemeal bread at breakfast and for sandwiches.
5. Add lentils, pulses or grains to soups to increase fibre content and make the dish more filling.
6. Include fish and vegetarian options for a main meal at least 3 times a week.
7. Meat, poultry and fish portions should be about 100 grams per person.

#### Substitute

8. Instead of hard cheese, use cottage and ricotta cheese.
9. Offer fruit or savoury crispbreads instead of biscuits and cakes for snacks.

#### Limit

10. Only have mash once a week and make it with milk and seasoning, no butter, spread or cream.
11. Keep desserts as treats and include once or twice a week only.

#### Avoid

12. Do not deep fry; instead bake, grill or steam.
13. Avoid pies, burgers, hot chips, pastries, cream and custard.
14. Encourage all residents to reduce or avoid sugar in drinks and on breakfast cereals.

#### Add Variety

15. Aim to serve at least 3 different vegetables or a large salad at each main meal.
16. Vary carbohydrates daily. This can be rice, mash, baked sweet potato, pasta, boiled potato, jacket potato or baked pumpkin.
17. Try different types of rice such as basmati, brown and a combination of brown and white.

#### Follow Guidelines

18. For extra guidelines follow the Red, Amber and Green food information.  
[http://www.healthyoptions.health.wa.gov.au/visitors/traffic\\_light.cfm](http://www.healthyoptions.health.wa.gov.au/visitors/traffic_light.cfm)

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES

HealthRight Guidelines are based on the work done in three Perth hostels as described above and have been developed as an outcome of this work. They are not monitored and it is suggested that the guidelines be included in the policy of all licensed psychiatric hostels.

**Review Date: July 2009**



## Food Service Guidelines for Hostels

### 5. REFERENCES AND LINKS TO MORE INFORMATION.

Hospitals (Licensing and Conduct of Private Psychiatric Hostels) Regulations 1997

[http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol\\_reg/hacopp1997726/s10.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_reg/hacopp1997726/s10.html)

National Health and Medical Research Council Nutrition Guidelines

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/files/n33.pdf>

Health Options WA: Food and Nutrition Policy for WA Health

[http://www.healthyoptions.health.wa.gov.au/visitors/traffic\\_light.cfm](http://www.healthyoptions.health.wa.gov.au/visitors/traffic_light.cfm)

Duty to Care Report: Available from <http://www.healthright.org.au/go/top-nav/about-healthright>

HealthRight Project: <http://www.healthright.org.au>

Office of Mental Health: <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/mentalhealth/home>

Service Standards for Non-Government Providers of Community Mental Health:

<http://www.waamh.org.au/docs/Service%20Standards%20for%20NGO.pdf>

WA Association of Mental Health: <http://www.waamh.org.au>

Office of Mental Health (2004). Who is Your GP? Final Report of the HealthRight Advisory Group. Perth: Department of Health, Government of Western Australia

For more information on the HealthRight Project please contact Project Officer Ann Bates: Phone: (08) 9433 0329

Email: [batesa@meddent.uwa.edu.au](mailto:batesa@meddent.uwa.edu.au)