Principles of safe and effective nutritional care

Admission
- Admission information (needs, preferences, allergies, etc) documented, communicated and shared with staff as appropriate, including catering department
- Nutritional screening (eg MUST) completed accurately within 24 hours of admission
- Associated individualised care plan implemented
- Referrals made as appropriate, eg to dietician or speech and language therapist
- Processes in place to ensure individuals requiring special diets and or assistance at meal times are identified as soon as possible

During stay
- Repeat nutritional screening, as appropriate to level of risk and care setting
- Care plans are reviewed and updated regularly and as determined by individual need
- Ensure good communication/handover about individual's nutritional progress
- Ensure protected meal times are embedded, implementing the 'Making Meals Matter' pack
- Those individuals identified as requiring special diets and or assistance at meal times are supported on an ongoing basis. Food and fluid charts are completed
- Provide sufficient fluids and document intake on fluid chart if required
- Process in place to ensure provision of, encouragement with and documentation of any oral nutritional supplements
- Support individuals to participate in local audit and feedback, to support service improvements

Discharge/Transfer
- Ensure nutritional screening (eg MUST) and care plan is up to date
- Discharge documentation to be completed including relevant nutritional information (see Communication Tool - part of ‘Making Meals Matter’ pack: see www.nutritioncare.scot.nhs.uk)
- Inform involved healthcare professionals and relevant others of discharge/transfer date

Staff
- Ensure staff attend relevant education and training sessions and are aware of best practice and local guidelines relating to nutritional care
- Have an identified member of staff in each area with a special interest in nutritional care
- Include processes and procedures associated with nutritional care as part of staff induction/orientation

Help us to make our meals matter

This document has been developed to support local quality improvement and monitoring. This is part of the ‘Making Meals Matter’ pack, developed by the Improving Nutritional Care Programme, Healthcare Improvement Scotland (2011). Copies can be downloaded from www.nutritioncare.scot.nhs.uk and www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org