



Food Allergy and Intolerance Menu Assessment Tool

This tool can be adapted and used to assist hospitals and other facilities to plan menus that have the opportunity to provide adequate nutrition for inpatients or residents when ingredients and menu items must be eliminated and substituted for food allergies or intolerances.

The tool focuses on the 10 most common food allergens but other allergens can be added as needed.

Definition: For the purposes of this tool, the term 'allergen-free' refers to foods/ingredients that are suitable for patients with food allergies.

For practical management of food preparation and storage for food allergies and intolerances, the [Food Allergy and Intolerance Management Audit Tool](#) should be used. Refer to the [Food Allergen Ingredient Substitution Tool](#) for assistance in choosing appropriate food alternatives.

The key principle of ensuring nutritional adequacy for patients with food allergy and intolerance, is that appropriate meal choices include **substitution or alternative choices**, not just omission of the allergen which can result in inadequate nutritional content of the meal.

The tool is best used in conjunction with a [Food Allergen Menu Matrix](#) that should be developed for the menu; or with the automated menu system if available.

General checklist:

- Kitchen has processes in place to identify and communicate which patients have food allergies.
- Patients with three or more food allergies have their menus individually checked by diet aid/nutrition assistant/dietitian assistant/dietitian to ensure patients are provided with adequate meal choices.
- Where adequate choices are not available on the standard hospital or facility menu, meal components are available to allow meals to be provided to patients with food allergies or intolerances.

Acknowledgement: This tool was developed based on the Dietitians Association of Australia 'Menu Audit Tool for Aged Care Homes', which was based off the New Zealand Dietitians 'Menu Audit Tool for Aged Care Facilities'.

Adequacy of menu for Allergen Elimination: Menu day _____

Menu Item	Recommended Practice	Allergenic or intolerant food														Comments/Actions	
		C O W S M I L K	L O W L A C T O S E	S O Y	E G G	W H E A T	G L U T E N	F I S H	S H E L L F I S H	P E A N U T	T R E E N U T	S E S A M E	L U P I N	C O W S M I L K + S O Y	I N S E R T O W N		
Cow's milk*	Calcium fortified beverage available with at least 100mg calcium/100ml																e.g. comment on types available, nutritional adequacy of the substitutes and any actions to take.
	Option available with equivalent protein and energy to cow's milk																
	Offered at same frequency as state nutrition standard																
	Portion size meets state nutrition standard																
Yoghurt*	An allergen free alternative is available																
	The alternative is calcium fortified																
	Alternative has equivalent protein and fat to cow's milk yoghurt																
	Offered at same frequency as state nutrition standard																
Breakfast protein	Portion size meets state nutrition standard																
	Allergen free option available																
Breakfast Cereal*	At least one allergen free cereal option is available																
	High fibre (>3g/100g) is available																
	Portion size meets state nutrition standard																
Bread or toast*	Allergen free variety available																
	High and Low Fibre varieties are available																
	Offered on menu at same frequency as state nutrition standard																
Spreads*	Allergen free margarine or fat spread available																
Sandwiches*	Allergen free option available (including bread) twice a day																
	Sandwich ingredient portions meets state nutrition standard																

Menu Item	Recommended Practice	Allergenic or intolerant food														Comments/Actions	
		C O W S M I L K	L O W L A C T O S E	S O Y	E G G	W H E A T	G L U T E N	F I S H	S H E L L F I S H	P E A N U T	T R E E N U T	S E S A M E	L U P I N	C O W S M I L K + S O Y	I N S E R T O W N		
Soup*	Allergen free option available																e.g. comment on types available, nutritional adequacy of the substitutes and any actions to take.
	Portion size meets state nutrition standard																
Hot Mains*	Allergen free option available twice a day																
	At least one high iron option available / day																
	Vegetarian – allergen free option available																
	Band Option meets state nutrition standard																
Sides (potato/rice/pasta)	At least one allergen free option available lunch and dinner																
	Portion size meets state nutrition standard																
Vegetables	2 allergen free varieties available twice a day																
	2 different colours available daily																
	Portion size meets state nutrition standard																
Main Salad	Allergen free alternative available																
	Portion size meets state nutrition standard																
Desserts*	Allergen free dessert available																
	Dessert specification meets state nutrition standard																
Mid Meal Snack*	Allergen free snack option available at each mid-meal service																
	1 snack with high nutritional value (refer to state standard)																
Beverages (hot and cold)	Calcium fortified beverage available with at least 100mg calcium/100ml																
	Option available with equivalent protein and energy to cow's milk																
Sauces and dressings*	Allergen free option available																

Menu Item	Recommended Practice	Allergenic or intolerant food														Comments/Actions	
		C O W S M I L K	L O W L A C T O S E	S O Y	E G G	W H E A T	G L U T E N	F I S H	S H E L L F I S H	P E A N U T	T R E E N U T	S E S A M E	L U P I N	C O W S M I L K + S O Y	I N S E R T O W N		
Energy	Menu provides opportunity to meet energy requirement Y/N (requires nutritional analysis or estimate)																e.g. comment on types available, nutritional adequacy of the substitutes and any actions to take.
Fat	Fat/Saturated Fat content of menu is within limits Y/N (requires nutritional analysis or estimate)																
Protein	Menu provides opportunity to meet protein requirement Y/N (requires nutritional analysis or estimate)																
Calcium	Menu provides opportunity to meet calcium requirement Y/N (requires nutritional analysis or estimate)																
Dietary fibre	Menu provides opportunity to meet fibre requirement Y/N (requires nutritional analysis or estimate)																
Iron	Menu provides opportunity to meet iron requirement Y/N (requires nutritional analysis or estimate)																
Zinc	Menu provides opportunity to meet zinc requirement Y/N (requires nutritional analysis or estimate)																
Vitamin C	Menu provides opportunity to meet vit C requirement Y/N (requires nutritional analysis or estimate)																
Folate	Menu provides opportunity to meet folate requirements Y/N (requires nutritional analysis or estimate)																
Sodium	Sodium content of menu is within limits Y/N (requires nutritional analysis or estimate)																

* Check 'may contain' statements for all foods.

Summary Evaluation Table

Add rows as required

Allergen	Nutrition met adequately Yes/No	Action Required
Cow's milk		
Lactose		
Soy		
Egg		
Wheat		
Gluten		
Fish		
Shellfish		
Peanut		
Tree nut		
Sesame		
Lupin		
Add own allergen		

Appendix: Guideline for meeting minimum Hospital Menu nutrition standards by State

This table summarises the nutrition standards for each state and provides suggestions for allergy alternatives that can be offered to meet the standards.

Dietitians should refer to the relevant state Nutrition Standards document when using the audit tool for detailed description of nutritional standards and portion sizes.

The guideline recognises that some sites may only be able to offer limited choice.

Dietitians should carefully consider what standard they will apply when assessing nutritional adequacy: audit tables can be modified to state the specific nutrition standard or specification.

Patients with multiple food allergies may need referral to dietetics for individual meal planning as elimination of multiple allergens can result in limited menu choices which may not meet nutrition standards.

	WA	SA	NSW	Qld	Vic *
Breakfast					
Cold cereal	Standard = 4 choices, at least 50% with fibre >3g/100g For allergens: Ideally 2 allergen free choices, 1 with >3g fibre/100g. Also consider sugar content. Small sites may only be able to offer 1 choice.			Standard = 1 high fibre and 1 low fibre choice For allergens: at least 1 choice, preferably high fibre.	-
Hot cereal	Standard = Some sites may offer hot cereal alternative (cow's milk free, wheat or gluten free) as per standards, but this is not essential to meet nutritional requirements. Allergens: optional hot cereal available.				-
Bread	Standard = Offered at each main meal, white and wholemeal available. Allergens: Suitable allergen free bread choice for relevant allergen available, preferably high fibre. Served at same frequency and portion size as state nutrition standard.				
Breakfast Protein (Cold protein or cooked breakfast/hot protein)	Offer allergen free cooked breakfast for special diets/as required, to similar nutritional value as nutrition standards Allergen free Yoghurt option at breakfast.	Offer a suitable allergen free protein option as per nutrition standard.	Offer a suitable allergen free protein option as per nutrition standard.	Adults and Paediatrics: Offer a suitable hot allergen free protein option as per nutrition standard.	-
Milk alternative	Low fat and full fat options (if available) Cow's milk free option Soy free option Cow and soy free option (there may not be full fat varieties available) All options contain at least 100mg calcium/100mL Check for other allergens Check protein content – may need to provide additional protein during the day as some beverages are low in protein and fat (e.g. rice and oat beverages).				

	WA	SA	NSW	Qld	Vic *
Main Meals – Lunch and Dinner – offer allergen free options to meet the relevant nutrition standard					
Soup	Site Specific	Type 1 once a day	Band 1 or 2 once a day	1/day, Group 1 or 2	-
Hot dish	A Band 1 or 2 option is available twice a day. If the option is vegetarian it should be a Band 1.	Lunch and dinner: Meal option provides 20g Protein/90g edible meat. If vegetarian, 600kJ/10g protein per serve.	A Band 1 or 2 option is available twice a day. If the option is vegetarian it should be a Band 1.	Paediatric and adults: Meal option is Group 1 or 2. Lunch and dinner.	Band 1 or 2 option at lunch and dinner.
Sandwiches	Band 1 option at lunch and dinner.	At least 1 sandwich option at lunch and dinner. At least 10g protein per serve.	Band 1 option at lunch and dinner.	Paediatric and adults: A Group 1 option at lunch and dinner.	Band 1 option at lunch and dinner.
Main Salad	Band 1 or Band 2 salad at least once a day.	Main salad option at lunch and dinner. At least 20g per serve.	Band 1 or Band 2 salad at least once a day.	Paediatric – as requested Adults – 1 per day, lunch & dinner.	Band 1 or 2 option at least once a day.
Potato, rice, pasta	At least 1 Gluten, wheat or allergen free option available at lunch and dinner, same minimum serve size as state standard				
Vegetables	Two allergen free varieties available twice a day. Two different coloured vegetable options daily, same portion size as state standard.				
Dessert	Band 1 option once a day.	At least 1 suitable dessert option that meets nutrition specifications.	Band 1 option once a day.	Group 1 or 2 once a day.	Band 1 or 2 option once a day.
	More frequent repetition of 'allergy friendly' desserts is acceptable.				
Mid meal Snack	3/day At least 1 allergy alternative snack offered with significant protein and energy content.				

*Victorian menu standards denote Bands and serving sizes but the minimum menu choice is site specific. The recommendations in this table for Victoria are a guide to meeting nutrition requirements for patients who have to eliminate foods or food groups.

References/links to state hospital menu standards:

https://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/160555/ACI_Adult_Nutrition_web.pdf

https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/nutrition_standards

https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/156288/qh-nutrition-standards.pdf

<http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/45b4ae0045d04e7d9bdcfbac725693cd/14130+1+Menu+Nutr+Stand+Report-v5.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

https://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/160556/Nutrition-standards-for-paediatric-inpatients-in-NSW-hospitals.pdf

<http://www.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/attachments/1108.pdf>