Prevent and reduce food waste in the healthcare sector

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**Food waste: policy context**

**Objective**

Reach [SDG 12.3](#) to halve food waste by 2030
- today around 100 million tonnes of food are wasted every year in the EU

**Key actions – EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste**

- Develop an EU methodology to measure food waste
- Clarify EU legislation on waste, food and feed, and encourage food donation
- Improve the use and understanding of date marking along the food chain
- Create a platform for the SDG on food waste and share best practices and results achieved

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu_actions/eu-platform_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu_actions/eu-platform_en)
Interviews with European hospitals and healthcare systems about their strategies to prevent and reduce food waste:

- 7 hospitals from four European countries (Denmark, France, Spain, and the UK),
- 2 regional programmes from Denmark and Sweden, and
- 2 national initiatives from Ireland and The Netherlands, and

Examples can serve as a role model and inspire others to give the problem of food waste the recognition it deserves in the healthcare sector.
Prevent and reduce food waste in the healthcare sector: why is it important?

Reducing the **high wastage rates** at healthcare is a priority and an opportunity to:
- Invest in better and healthier meals
- Reduce complications and increase speed recovery
- Fight against climate change and generate social and economic benefits (e.g. by supporting direct marketing or short-supply chains)
- Change the old model of doing things

The healthcare sector is adopting preventive and resource efficiency approaches:
- Awareness around **smart purchasing**, storage and preparation of food
- Optimizing their **ordering system**
- Establishing **protected mealtimes**,
- Offering different **portion sizes** (i.e. large, standard, or small), or
- Improving coordination, education, and communication (internally and externally)
Recommendations

- **Know your suppliers** and incorporate sustainable criteria in your public procurement.
- **Cook meals on-site**, and ensure new build includes kitchens.
- Establish **protected mealtimes**.
- Ensure patients can select different **portion sizes**.
- Do **satisfaction surveys** to change menus, if needed.
- **Train your staff**, in prior phases and adequate separation of waste.
- Use **transparent waste bins**.
- Focus on **prevention and explore some alternatives** to redistribute surplus food.
- **Organise focus or work groups** for testing different culinary innovations, consistencies or presentations.
Challenges ahead

• **Procurement** process maximise opportunities for sustainability - Consider the best outset (LCA) and clarify requirements to include them in contracts

• Make sure you have **board support, clinical engagement**, and a good **patient representation** in the team

• **Train and raise awareness** – change the mindset in the hospital

• **Look for solutions / innovative technologies to forecast your demand** – reduction of cost and wastage

• **Stop and reflect** throughout the project stages to make sure you are delivering the project – how to **transform good practice into standard practice**?

Image: Irish Green Healthcare programme on food waste
HCWH Europe Food Pledge

My institution will:

- Improve the food we serve to patients, staff, and visitors
- **Offer more plant-derived foods** instead of serving energy-dense and highly processed and packaged products.
- **Foster the educational role of healthcare providers**
- Ensure better coordination and communication between health professionals, administration, and catering staff
- Strengthen the local economy by purchasing more fresh, seasonal, local and, where possible, organic produce
- Be open to opportunities for innovation
- Prevent and decrease food waste and explore alternatives at our healthcare facility
- **Work in partnership with other food service providers** and commit to sharing best practices with other healthcare and public health institutions

To sign the pledge, please visit: https://noharm-europe.org/issues/europe/healthy-sustainable-food-healthcare-pledge
Food report (forthcoming)
Thank you for your attention!

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www.noharm-europe.org