



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

https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu_actions/eu-platform_en

- 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

HCWH Europe work

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

Food waste in European healthcare settings

Case studies from around Europe and recommendations for preventing and reducing food waste in healthcare.





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



Check your fridge



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



Image: Irish Green Healthcare programme on food waste

- **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?**



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)



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Fresh, healthy and sustainable food

Best practices in European healthcare





Thank you for your attention!

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