

Meal Quality Audit

The Purpose of a Meal Quality Audit is to evaluate the quality of a meal, independent of patients, at ward level during a normal meal service and identify any areas for improvement.

The Meal Quality Audit tool provides the means to:

1. Systematically identify wide-ranging quality improvement issues by scheduling regular audits to cover the entire menu and use results as a reportable Key Performance Indicator.
2. Investigate complaints or reported issues with meals or specific menu items on an ad hoc basis.
3. Objectively and subjectively rank meals and menu items
4. Assist in the change management process of implementing a new menu

Quality is determined by the assessment of total tray appearance, accuracy of tray items, food items and portion sizes, and the sensory properties of the meal.

Procedure:

1. A “test” meal is ordered to be plated and sent to a ward along with other patient meals. Audits will occur across all days of the menu cycle, meal times and wards.
2. Observe the arrival of the meal trolley to the ward and meal distribution. The “test” meal should not be removed from the trolley until the last tray is handed out.
3. Ideally, the test meal should be assessed at the ward station to encourage ward staff to participate.
4. The test team should comprise at least 3 people, including a staff member from Nutrition/dietetics, Food Services and an independent ward staff member. If a texture modified diet is being assessed, also include a Speech Pathologist in the team.
5. Do not remove any lids until the whole testing team has assembled and is ready to commence the audit.
6. Read the following instructions and complete the meal audit in the order on the audit tool.

INSTRUCTIONS

for auditing a meal using the Meal Quality Audit Tool

PART A Appearance

Look at the overall appearance, including placement of items, stains, spills, chips etc.

Minimize lifting any lids during this step because this will affect temperature assessments in Part B.

PART B Accuracy - Temperature

Assess temperature against targets. Test all items, excluding: condiments, plain bread or rolls, vegetables served in small pieces e.g. peas, sliced carrots, broccoli, cauliflower or ‘undressed’ vegetables served as part of a salad.

PART C Accuracy -table setting, food items, portion size and food texture

Table setting – check for adequate cutlery to consume all food items and correct condiments, napkins.

Food Items – check that all food items specified on the menu card have been provided.

Portion Sizes – visually assess portions against set specifications.

Food Texture – Food items meet the diet texture specifications

PART D Sensory Evaluation

Foods should be scored according to normal expectations of the food item (think about how you’d like this food to be served to a relative). Some sensory properties when applied to specific items will require special interpretations. For example, if lack of aroma is expected for milk then milk is ranked highest and “excellent” is circled. Similarly, lack of texture (a puree diet) may also be considered “excellent” if this is what is expected. If an individual involved in the testing usually dislikes a food items being tested, they should not participate.

After ranking all foods individually, give an overall score for the meal for sensory quality.

Summary

After completing parts A – D, complete Summary Page writing the final scores for each part and outline any problems if identified and recommendations for improvements.

Meal Quality Audit Tool

Summary

Date: _____ Diet Description: _____

Trolley left kitchen: _____

Audit Start Time: _____ Audit Finish Time: _____

Assessment Team:

Scores:

Quality component	Score	Goal
Part A - Appearance		4
Part B – Accuracy temperature		4
Part C – Accuracy Table Setting, Food Items, Portion sizes and Food Texture		5
Part D - Sensory		4

Problems Identified:

Recommended Actions:

PART A – APPEARANCE							
	Very Appealing	Appealing	Okay	Unappealing	Very Unappealing	Weighting	Score
Tray Setting Attractive without stains, chips or spills	5	4	3	2	1	x 3	
Complete Meal Attractive and corresponds to plating specifications	5	4	3	2	1	x 7	
Comments						Subtotal	
						Final Score (Part A) = Subtotal ÷ 10	

PART B – ACCURACY Temperature					
Background on temperature assessments					
<i>The temperature targets below are based on food safety temperature targets for holding of hot and cold foods, but additionally allow for a reasonable delivery time to the patient/client.</i>					
<i>For a cold plate and rethermalize system, different temperature targets would need to be determined.</i>					
<i>*High risk items include: items containing meat, poultry, seafood, egg.</i>					
	Temperature targets				
Test food	Correct	Adequate	Inadequate	Unacceptable	
Hot Food	>60°C	>55°C	50°C - 55°C	<50°C	
Hot Liquids	>65°C	>60°C	55°C - 60°C	<55°C	
Cold Items	<10°C	10°C - 15°C	15°C - 20°C	>20°C	
Frozen Items	frozen	soft but still solid	Starting to melt	melted	
STEP 1 - Record temperatures and assessment here (Tick Temperature Assessment)					
Item _____ Temp _____ °C	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable	
Item _____ Temp _____ °C	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable	
Item _____ Temp _____ °C	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable	
Item _____ Temp _____ °C	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable	
Item _____ Temp _____ °C	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable	
Item _____ Temp _____ °C	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable	
Item _____ Temp _____ °C	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable	
Item _____ Temp _____ °C	<input type="checkbox"/> Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable	
STEP 2 – Interpreting the temperatures from Step 1 above, provide an overall score for temperature					
All items correct	All items correct or adequate	1-2 items or 1 high risk item* are inadequate	3 items inadequate; or 1 item unacceptable	> 3 items inadequate; or ≥2 items unacceptable; or >1 high risk item* unacceptable	Final Score (Part B)
5	4	3	2	1	

PART C – ACCURACY

Table Setting, Food Items, Portion sizes & Food Texture

	No Errors	1 Error	2 Errors	3 Errors	4+ or critical diet error	Weighting	Score	
Table Setting – correct and appropriate cutlery, dishes, napkins, condiments.	5	4	3	2	1	x 1		
Food Items – correct and appropriate according to diet ordered	5	4	3	2	1	x 4		
Portion Sizes – correct and appropriate as specified	5	4	3	2	1	x 2		
Food Texture – correct as required eg smooth, no lumps, correct thickness	5	4	3	2	1	x 3		
Comments						Subtotal		
	Final Score (Part C) = Subtotal ÷ 10							

PART D - FOOD ITEM SENSORY EVALUATION
Aroma, Temperature, Appearance, Taste, Texture

Meal Item	Very Good	Good	Okay	Poor	Very Poor	Comments
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
	5	4	3	2	1	
Overall Sensory Evaluation (Final Score Part D)	5	4	3	2	1	

