

Plate Waste

WHAT

- Plate waste observations can be used to identify if the amount of food that is being served at meal times is meeting residents' needs.
- Leftover food on residents' plates that is not eaten does not contribute to the residents' dietary intake and therefore influences their nutrition status.
- Suboptimal food intake can increase the residents' risk of falls, contribute to weight loss, lead to nutrient deficiencies and delay wound healing.

WHY

- Providing the right amount of food to meet the residents' nutrition needs will result in cost effective services.
- 5-20% of plate waste is the goal for each meal.
- Excess plate waste is detrimental to the residents' nutritional status as residents may not be eating enough to meet their energy requirements.
- Plate waste observations are one way of determining whether the facility is meeting the dietary needs of the individual and the outcomes of these observations can aid accreditation.

WHEN

- Plate waste can be measured at any or all of the meal times - breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner, supper.

WHO

- Any or all residents' at the facility can be observed to measure plate waste.
- Nursing staff, carers, family and friends of the resident can all participate in observing and measuring plate waste.

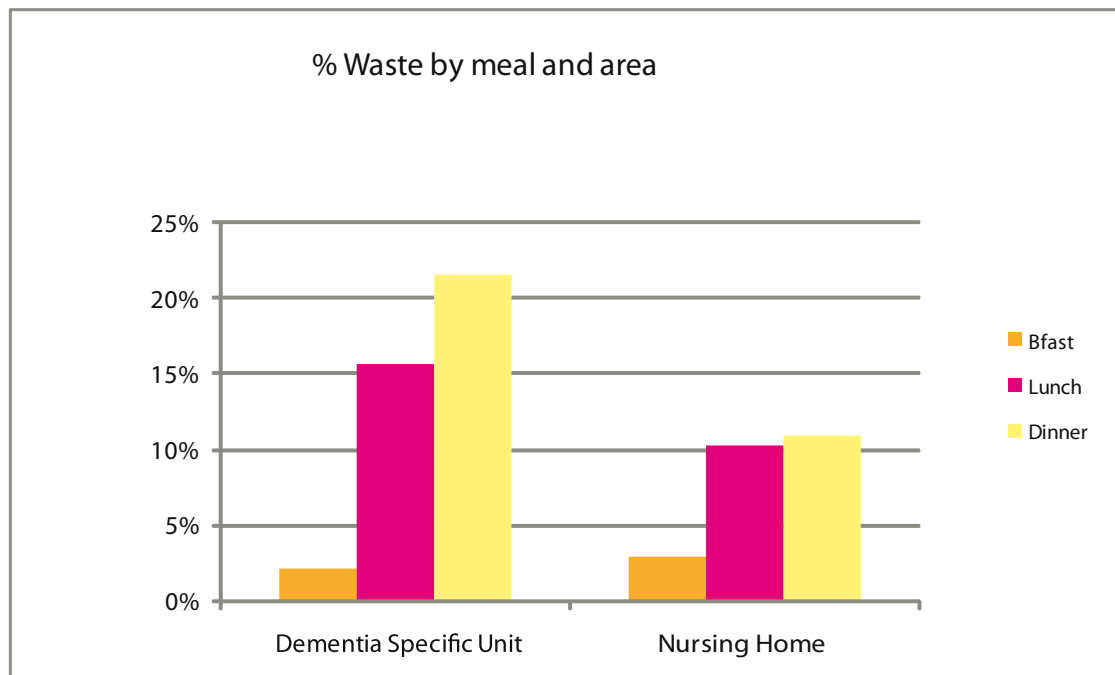
HOW

- Observe residents in the dining room, particularly residents who have a large amount of plate waste, to see how much of their meals they are eating.
- Record the amount of plate waste left at the end of the resident's meal using the *Resident Plate Waste Chart (Chart 5)*. An estimation of the amount of meal left is recorded ie if $\frac{1}{4}$ of the casserole is not eaten by the resident then $\frac{1}{4}$ should be indicated on the food record.
- If a resident has large amounts of plate waste at meals regularly, it should be discussed with the resident. It is useful to talk to the resident about their food likes and dislikes, appetite and any symptoms they may experience with eating (eg pain, nausea, ill-fitting dentures).
- Introducing high energy snacks (see *Information Sheet 14*) between meals, helping the resident make meal selections from the menu or helping to alleviate any issues they may have at meal time (eg pain) can help increase food intake and reduce plate waste.
- Alternative to this method you can also see appendix 4 in the *Best Practice Food and Nutrition Manual for Aged Care Facilities*, pg 151, for the Plate Wastage Survey form.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Individual results need to be compiled to ensure the resident is having an adequate intake. This will give a warning of potential weight loss issues before the regular weighing pick up changes.

Analysis of Meals and Dishes- compilation of results across the facility will allow the identification of meals and dishes that are of concern (ie have a high amount or zero plate waste).



These graphs indicate the waste at breakfast in both areas is very low. In fact they indicate there is a need to increase the options available at this meal. There is a great opportunity here to offer a hot breakfast, and more desserts at lunch and dinner.

