

The Hot Food Cart System

Does your facility have any of these challenges?

- high food wastage
- limited “resident & food service staff” contact
- discontented residents regarding limited choice
- long individual food preference lists in the kitchen
- difficulty tracking and updating resident ‘likes/dislike’ lists
- rigidity with meal service
- poor teamwork between departments
- lots of dining room noise



Then it is time to change to the Hot Food Cart System!

The Hot Food Cart system is based on the philosophy that a care facility is a place that many people call “HOME”. Therefore it is believed that the food service delivery system should be as “home-like” as possible.

The Hot Food Cart System consists of several carts with food or beverages on them. These carts travel to each table to allow the residents to make their selection. The main cart is a custom made, stainless steel mobile cart, which is stocked with the entrée items (and alternates). This cart travels throughout the dining room or unit. The residents are informed of their menu choices and are served accordingly. The residents have control of what they would like to eat and the quantity, because they are asked first, before food is plated.



To complement the Hot Food Cart and to complete the range of choices for the residents, standard food service carts are used for serving cereal, soup, beverages, and dessert. Staff members from both the care and food service team are responsible for these carts.

The benefits of having the food service and care staff serve in the dining room as a team has many benefits for the residents, staff and management/owners.

SUZY Q MENU CONCEPTS

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Benefits of the Hot Food Cart System

For the Residents:

- Residents see and smell the food before choosing it
- The food and plates are served hotter
- Residents choose what they would like to eat as well as the quantity
- They have direct contact with the dietary staff: allows for immediate feedback on the acceptance of the food
- Most portion packed foods are replaced with bulk condiments: easier for residents to handle and open
- Residents eat better because they eat what they want, and can finish the food on their plate



For Management/Owners:

- Major cost savings from minimal food wastage and leftover utilization
- Greater satisfaction for residents and families
- A marketing and sales advantage for potential residents and keeping existing residents
- Teamwork between food service and nursing staff greatly improved

For the Dietary Staff:

- They personally get to know the residents while serving
- They do not have long “likes/dislikes lists” to read for each resident
- No pre-portioning of milk, juices or desserts
- Replace portion packs with bulk food

For the Nursing Staff:

- Residents leave the table more content and therefore not requiring as much attention after meals
- Less complaints during meals resulting in more time being spend assisting residents during meals
- Charting on how the resident ate is easier because of more staff interaction with the residents
- Perfect for special care units to allow the flexibility of serving meals based on the resident’s schedule

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Testimonies of the Benefits of the Hot Food Cart System

Residents

“You have your choice of food” (*John, 83*)

“You get what you want and the amount” (*Edna, 92*)

“Food that I don’t want to eat is not on my plate” (*Florence, 94*)

“I like getting to know the staff and they know about food preferences” (*Walter, 87*)

Food Service Staff

“I find with the Hot Food Cart system that the meal service is a lot better for our residents. They seem happier because they have a choice of what they want and the amount. It gives the cooks time to get to know the residents and spend a bit of time talking with them. You get to know their likes & dislikes a lot better because of this. Their food stays hotter by serving this way and this makes them happy.” (*Ingrid, cook*)

“This system works very well and doesn’t take any more time to serve the meals. There is more contact time with the residents so you get to know them, and leftovers are used much better. It took some time to get adjusted to the change, but I wouldn’t go back to the pre-plate system.” (*Betty, cook*)

“Now you get a different perspective of the residents as you get to know and interact with them. It is better for workload as you don’t have to run back and forth to the kitchen. There is much less waste, portion sizes are individual and it is much better”. (*Lilli, dietary aid*)

Care Services

“Food service for the residents is more relaxed and less rushed. As a resident attendant we don’t have to know that diet types the residents take, the amount, preferences, etc. as the dietary staff are now out in the dining room with the residents. I much prefer this system.” (*Myra, Care Aid*)

Management/Owners

“The most important result has been in the resident satisfaction. The residents are able to have a choice, and dine in a home-like atmosphere. Food is no longer served by trays which tends to be unappealing and certainly not home-like. Also, the residents get to know the people who prepare the food and it does make meal times more personal. The care staff are not busy running around carrying trays of food anymore, but are hands-on regarding the resident’s nutritional care”. (*Wanda, Director of Care*)

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