



A NEW ERA IN

# ACUTE CARE

DINING

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## TRENDS IN THE ACUTE CARE DINING

A New View for  
**HOSPITAL DINING**

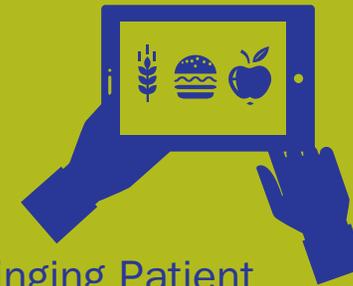


Grabbing  
the Market  
on **Convenience**



Capitalizing on  
**CONSUMER  
DEMAND**

TAKING  
'HAVE TO EAT'  
TO 'WANT TO  
EAT' THROUGH  
**ACUTE CARE  
MENU  
CREATION**



Bringing Patient  
**SATISFACTION  
BEDSIDE**

FRESH, CLEAN,  
LOCAL FOODS;  
**JUST WHAT THE  
DOCTOR ORDERED**



EXCHANGING SHORT ORDER  
**FOR EXECUTIVE**

DESIGNING  
**TO THE  
TREND**



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DINING

Throughout recent years, a trend has moved into the hospital sector that has changed the perception of institutional dining, successfully turning consumer's thoughts of gravy-laden cafeteria offerings into desirable culinary experiences. Gone are the days of cold meatloaf and instant mashed potatoes; consumers now demand fresh, local, sustainable, healthy foods in hospital facilities. The shift from 'have to eat' to 'want to eat' begins at the base structure of acute care dining, and reaches all the way to patient satisfaction scores, impacting clients, employees, operators, and even outside consumers along the way.

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## A NEW VIEW FOR HOSPITAL DINING

A new perception of acute care dining starts at the threshold. By creating an inviting space for consumers, a dining room rapidly becomes an oasis for what is almost always a stressful hospital atmosphere. Whether the consumer is a family member of a patient, or an employee sitting down to eat her first meal in 12 hours, creating a space to recharge and unwind is crucial to laying the foundation for success. Functionally speaking, facilities may require a remodel of their dining space and kitchens to set the stage for this transition to take place. To stay up to date with on-trend menus and healthful options, many kitchens require updated equipment to meet the preparation demands, such as steamers and steam tables, as well as additional freezer space to store fresh local foods for use out of season. By making these upgrades, large menu changes have the opportunity to take place.



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## CAPITALIZING ON CONSUMER DEMAND

An improved dining atmosphere appeals to the public by becoming a destination. As hospitals are often challenged to meet cost demands, the opportunity for a delicious, healthy meal at a low price point in a beautiful setting will draw unrelated consumers through the hospital doors, adding to the bottom line. Often, these restaurant style spaces are situated near the hospital's main entrance, opening the door to off-street consumers and attracting guests outside of the hospital-based audience. This allows the hospital to capture a larger percentage of the market share.

By offering an additional advantage of innovative technology, kiosk ordering is able to increase both consumer satisfaction and operator cost control. Kiosks help eliminate human error because the customer imports their order directly, without the assistance of staff, which ensures ordering accuracy, resulting in increased customer satisfaction. Direct ordering also reduces wait time, as the order is sent immediately, eliminating the need for an employee to handle the transaction. By implementing kiosk ordering, fewer staff members are required to manage the ordering process, as well.



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## TAKING 'HAVE TO EAT' TO 'WANT TO EAT' THROUGH **ACUTE CARE MENU CREATION**

A transition from what is on today's menu to what is on 'my menu' is critical for the modern hospital consumer. Giving consumers the option to add, remove, build, and create to their liking, results in a significant rise in satisfaction rates. Showcasing higher-end, culturally diverse options helps to modernize menus and increase traffic. By crafting a carefully mapped menu, capitalizing on seasonal trends and in-season local foods, a truly customized, destination experience can be achieved.



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## EXCHANGING SHORT ORDER FOR EXECUTIVE

A transition of staff perception, from food worker to executive chef, is the key to changing a once institutionalized concept into a true dining experience. Hospitals can transform an entire staff by showcasing the mind, passion, and care of an executive chef, and a location can be transformed from mundane to extraordinary. Having a true professional at the helm of the ship helps guide, grow, and nurture kitchen staff into employees who are more passionate about their jobs - a result that is most certainly noticed by guests. The desire to visually watch food being created in real time is another consumer-driven request, and executive chefs have the capacity to deliver their culinary showmanship through cooking demonstrations and tabled events. By placing emphasis on menu creation through the expert direction of a qualified executive chef, operators are able to capitalize on consumer demand, which helps to increase repeat business and boost the bottom line.



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## FRESH, CLEAN, LOCAL FOODS; JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

Consumers are requesting significant revamps to hospital menus, bringing fresh, clean, and local, with reduced sodium and sugar to the center of the plate. This trend has a positive impact on the bottom line, as well as sustainability efforts. Cost for local, in-season fruits and vegetables tend to be lower as a result of traveling a shorter distance from farm to table, which reduces price points. In turn, buying local boosts the community's economy, which helps to strengthen ties and improve public perception.

Fresh, local foods help to support employee wellness initiatives. It also focuses on the business case of all hospitals, being that healthier diets reduce readmission rates in patients. By providing healthy menu options, operators have the opportunity to support their client's business model, while capturing consumer profits.



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## GRABBING THE MARKET ON CONVENIENCE

Most hospital employees have limited amounts of time available to eat as a result of packed agendas and changing shift schedules. Many turn to grab-and-go options, and if satisfactory selections are not available to them, they opt out from eating at work. Both consumers and employees want higher-end, culturally diverse options in their grab-and-go menu selection, a need that is being uniquely met through the implementation of micro-markets. Micro-markets offer an array of options, made available to consumers through the use of space-saving coolers, which require no staff or employee management. Consumers simply reach into the cases, select their healthy meal, scan their item, and pay. Security measures are also placed to reduce loss and ensure proper procedure. Micro-markets provide 24 hour convenience to consumers, while requiring zero labor to operate. By expanding grab-and-go options from pizza slices and pre-made hoagies, to more advanced options centered on health and wellness, operators are able to increase hospital employee satisfaction while boosting their own bottom line.



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## BRINGING PATIENT SATISFACTION BEDSIDE

Many hospitals are reaping the benefits of room service style ordering, as they transition away from the mass produced breakfast, lunch, and dinner meal time feeding frenzy. No longer will patients circle 'carrots' or 'green beans' on their lunch card, but instead, they have the ability to order when they are hungry. Many hospitals are capitalizing on the benefits of technology by offering patients the convenience of order-placement through touch screen tablets. This reduces cost of labor, and ensures ordering accuracy. Technological advances are also found in the physical delivery of food, as more and more facilities are turning to robots to do their butler servicing. This approach to hospital room service is beneficial to operators, as well, as they are able to significantly reduce their waste production, while also mitigating back of house stress of feeding thousands of patients simultaneously with walk-in consumers.



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## DESIGNING TO THE TREND

To move your account to a more modern, on-point dining destination, entegra offers the opportunity to work together to reach your operations goals. From kitchen equipment and dining décor from the experts at Performance Interiors, to access to thousands of vendor partners globally, virtually any vision for an improved acute care dining operation can be attained.



**SOURCES:**

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