

## Trialling smaller size ready meals at Cardiff & Vale UHB and opportunities for food waste reduction

The food supplier Apetito has introduced a new *Puree Petite* range of meals for people suffering with dysphagia (swallowing difficulties). The range is smaller in size but has the same nutritional value compared with its standard pureed meal range.

A two week waste prevention trial was conducted with a cohort of patients on the Elderly Care Rehabilitation wards at St David's Hospital, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. The aim of the trial was to assess if there could be a direct link between the meal size and plate waste of pureed meals.

The key benefits identified during this trial were:

- Overall reduction in total weight of remaining plate waste for the smaller size meals
- Increased intake of protein and improved staff awareness of patient feeding needs
- Excellent collaborative working between food supplier and hospital.



Puree Petite meal above the standard sized meal

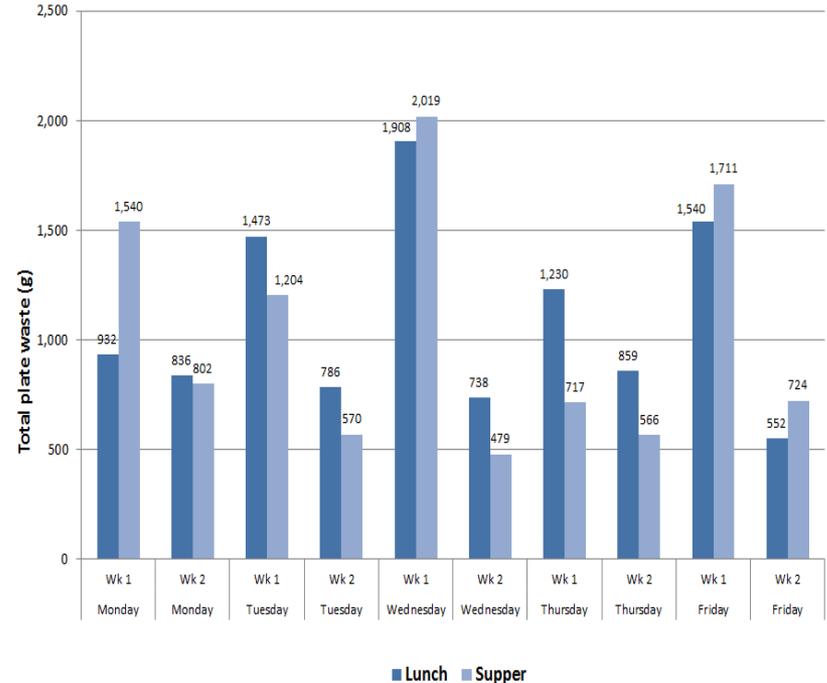
## Results

The cohort of elderly patients identified for the trial were on a longstanding pureed diet, likely to have the same food requirements over the trial period. Patients were fed standard puree main meals in Week 1 and the new Puree Petite main meals in Week 2. The typical weight of a Week 1 meal was 430g, compared with 270g for a Week 2 meal (160g (37%) lower than in week 1).

Dieticians on the ward weighed the main meal plate waste separately for each patient over the trial period. Additional information was collected, including the food group of the waste, if the patient ate soup and the temperature of meal when served, as these factors can effect appetite.

Key findings for the cohort of patient in the trial were:

- Reduction in total weight of plate waste was achieved for 62% of the smaller size meals for each day and meal period in Week 2. Overall a 51% reduction in plate waste, by weight, was observed from Week 1 to Week 2.
- Eating or not eating soup and the amount of plate waste was patient-specific – every patient had their own feeding requirements
- Patients with a good appetite were usually able to eat all of the protein in the smaller meals
- Meals may be best suited for those recovering from illness.



*"This was an interesting piece of work to be involved with and we hope that we can use some of the observations made to influence some of our working practices to improve the nutritional care of our patients"*

Liz Wilding, Dietician at St David's Hospital

Results

[Summary](#)

[Recommendations](#)

## Recommendations

The trial was conducted over a two week period for a cohort of patients who were on a longstanding pureed diet. Their feeding requirements were considered unlikely to change significantly over the trial period. However, the cohort was small in number and contained patients who, on this occasion, had extremes in appetite i.e. they had either a relatively large or very small appetite. Recommendations are as follows:

- Repeat the trial over a longer period of time
- Increase the cohort size
- Include patients who have small appetites, who prefer their food to be presented on a tea plate, as dietitians at the hospital have suggested the smaller sized meals may particularly suit them.

Pureed meals are also provided to patients who are temporarily suffering from dysphagia, for example, they have suffered a stroke or have undergone surgery that is impacting on their swallowing ability. Such patients may start eating small quantities of a pureed meal but eat progressively more as their appetite improves with improved health.

It is recommended that any further trial includes these types of patients as well to establish if the smaller meals reduces plate waste and increases nutritional uptake.

