



MEALTIME DANGERS; assessing food allergy practices within a sub-regional hospital

In Australia, food allergies occur in 1 in 20 children and 2 in 100 adults¹. The safe management of food allergies within the hospital setting is essential in reducing risk of adverse outcomes.

Current food allergy practices at Northeast Health Wangaratta (NHW) remain unclear and inaccurate, with a previous audit demonstrating only 43% accuracy between diet codes on the foodservice system compared to those on patient journey boards.

Our objectives aimed to improve patient safety, minimise harm and standardise food allergy management at NHW.

Methods:

- The following activities were undertaken;
1. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews on food allergy processes
 2. Thematic analysis of interview results
 3. Process mapping of key areas
 4. Point prevalence audit on documentation compliance
 5. Benchmarking with other health services

Table 1: Staff survey respondents

Total surveyed (n=19)	Staff Interviewed
Wards (n=8)	Nursing, ward clerks
Foodservice (n=7)	Foodservice manager, chef, menu monitors
Other (n=3)	Patient, dietitians, observation

Results:

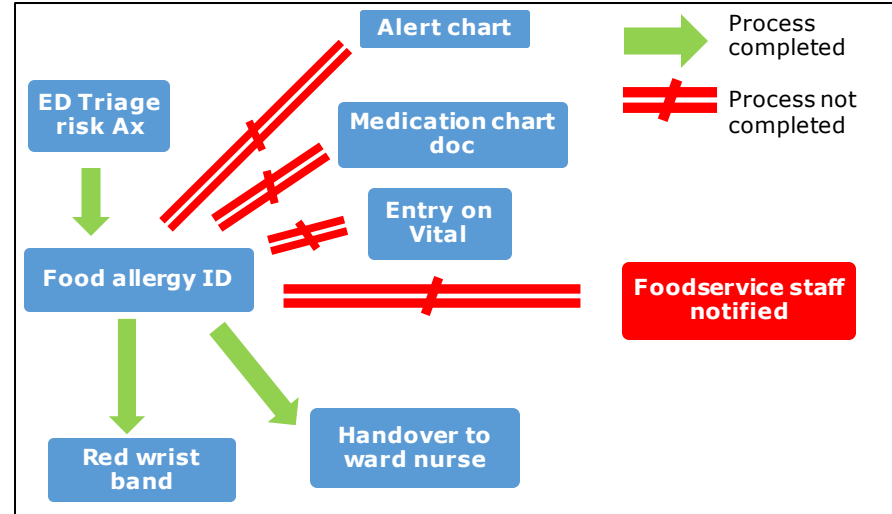


Figure 1: Process map for the Emergency Department

Point Prevalence Audit

Of the 85 patients surveyed, 5 patients had a documented food allergy.

Overall, there was only 40% documentation compliance to the NHW allergy guidelines.

Of greatest concern, 0% of documented food allergies were entered in the Chefmax foodservice system.

Table 2: Point prevalence results

N = 5	Yes	No
Alert Chart	1	4
Medication chart	2	3
Red wrist band	5	-
Vital entry	0	5
Board documentation	2	3
Chefmax entry	0	5
Correct order	0	5

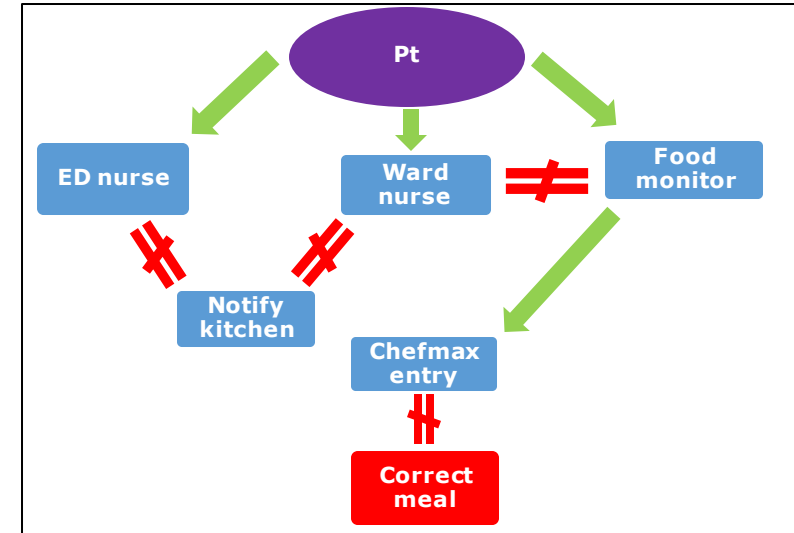


Figure 2: Patient journey process map

Key Outcomes:

Five key recommendations were developed to drive process change at NHW;

- Establishment of a multidisciplinary Food and Nutrition Committee
- Development of food allergy guidelines
- Foodservice technology update
- Foodservice, nursing and ward clerk training
- Menu review, including development of standardised recipes.



Elizabeth Walker¹, Eleanor Capel¹
¹Dietetics, Allied Health, Northeast Health Wangaratta
 Contact: elizabeth.walker@nhw.org.au

References: 1. Australian health survey: nutrition first results – food and nutrients, 2011-12. Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2014.