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## Fairfield Hospital embracing culinary cultural diversity

Fairfield Hospital is embracing its cultural diversity by providing patients with a range of foods that will not only satisfy their appetite but meet their nutritional and cultural requirements while in hospital.

Robyn El Khair, Community Participation Manager Fairfield Hospital said that the Fairfield community was among the most diverse and culturally unique in Australia.

“The majority of Fairfield residents speak a language other than English at home, the most common being Vietnamese, Arabic, Assyrian, Cantonese and Spanish,” Ms El Khair said.

“We are fortunate to have such diversity within our community and want to ensure the care and food we provide is culturally appropriate,” she said.

Following admission to hospital every patient that can eat will be placed on a diet as part of his/her medical condition and other requirements. There are a large range of diets including:

- Texture modified (*Puree, Minced, soft*)
- Lifestyle/religious needs (*Kosher, Vegetarian, Halal*)
- Nutrient modified (*Diabetic, low saturated fats, Low fat, high protein, low sodium*), etc.

Some patients may also have other special dietary requirements, for example a food allergy or need a gluten-free diet.

Jose Cabello, Fairfield Hospital Dietitian said that although food brought from home is not encouraged, sometimes friends or family bring food or drinks in for patients, so there are a few important things to remember.

“A well balanced menu is provided in hospital so we prefer people do not bring in food for patients,” Mr Cabello said.

“However if your loved one is craving their favourite home-cooked meal, it is important to check with the dietitian, nurse and speech pathologist first, as some foods may affect medicines or impact on certain medical conditions.

“Also, the hospital cannot accept responsibility for storing, heating or serving any food prepared outside its catering facilities,” he said.

Patients that are not eating well are referred by nursing staff to the ward dietitian for an individual assessment and to implement an appropriate nutrition care plan.