

Media release

Dietitians cook up ideas to provide a new menu of support

Those at risk of malnutrition, struggling with their appetite or losing weight, rely on dietitians for help. Prior to COVID-19, patients in East Surrey routinely saw the First Community Health and Care dietetic team in care homes, clinics, their own homes or community hospital wards. Sadly, their world was turned upside down when COVID-19 forced face to face dietetic services to be put on hold. However, thanks to some innovative ideas, dietetic support is still available.

Prescribing Support Dietitian Kate Evans who works for Surrey Heartlands East Surrey Integrated Care Partnership, explains how the dietitian team have overcome numerous challenges presented due to COVID-19.

“We have had to adapt to new ways of working and trial different options to discover what suits patients the best. Embracing change, we have introduced telephone clinics and consultations and are promoting and expanding online platforms and resources available to patients.

“We are determined to reduce the impact COVID-19 has on our patients’ nutritional status, for instance our new COVID-19 Food First advice sheets, available online, help provide useful hints and tips on managing symptoms”.

Complementing the advice sheets are a suite of [videos](#) showing how to make a range of fortified nutritional products. Produced by Kate and Juliette Harmer, Lead Prescribing and Care Home Support Dietitian, they highlight how people can make nourishing drinks and snacks at home to increase their intake of calories and protein.

The team have also developed virtual clinics and group sessions which they are currently trialling. Dietitian Cleo Kamere ran a group for the condition of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) on Thursday 7 May and describes how well the session went:

“Using the Zoom platform, seven patients from Surrey attended our new one hour group session, designed to help manage their IBS symptoms. During COVID-19 they have been unable to have face to face contact and the session provided them with the opportunity to interact with me which they were eager to do”.

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For more information please contact the Press Office on 07825 946551.

Notes for editors:

1. Surrey Heartlands is a partnership of health and care organisations working together across most of Surrey – with staff, patients, their carer's, families and members of the public – to transform local services and support people to live healthier lives. Together we are known as an 'Integrated Care System' – partnerships where health organisations, the local authorities and others take a *collective responsibility* for improving the health of the local population, managing resources (including money) and making sure services are high quality.
@SurreyHeartland <https://www.surreyheartlands.uk/>
2. First Community Health and Care is an employee-owned social enterprise, providing community healthcare services to people living in east Surrey and parts of West Sussex.
@1stchatter <https://www.firstcommunityhealthcare.co.uk/>