Food and Drink Policy in the Surgery Centers

Since the beginning of the year, a team of physicians and nurses have been examining the issue of food and drink in the Surgery Centers East and West. It is clear that we have a problem with the open display and consumption of food and beverages in many areas of the Surgery Centers including nursing stations, other work areas in direct proximity to the Operating Rooms and OR Hallways (behind the “red line”), PACU, and even in the Operating Rooms.

Dropped food and spilled drinks cannot help but attract vermin and detract from the clean environment that our work demands. Also, there is the possibility of employee food or drink being contaminated by chemical or biological toxins in our workplace and leading to employee illness or injury.

Based on these conclusions, the Surgery Center Nursing Directors will be stepping up education and enforcement of our existing policy regarding food and drink in the East and West Surgery Centers. Staff will be directed to eat their meals and keep their food in the designated nursing lounges. Open food will not be permitted in the Surgery Centers near the “red line”.

I am asking you, as members of the Medical Staff, to support the Surgery Center Nursing Directors as they work with their staff to change long-standing behaviors and habits. Those of us who have worked in other hospitals know attention to this issue will bring us in line with local practices and national guidelines. Keeping focus on what is best for our patients and the sustainability of the quality care we deliver will carry us past the temporary consternation that some staff will experience. On behalf of all of those who are involved in this effort, I thank you for your cooperation and support!

Thank you,
Edward Kolb, MD
Medical Director
Boys Town National Research Hospital