



GRAND ROUNDS

The more colourful the food, the more healthy it is for you, and one quick pass through the kitchen of RVH shows a rainbow of fruits, vegetables and heart-wise meals.

At a time of year when produce is so plentiful and bursting with flavour, choosing to eat plenty of fresh foods is an easy, cost-effective and extremely tasty option.

With an abundance of delicious ingredients popping up at local stands, at farmer's markets, and perhaps even in your own backyard, there's no excuse not to take advantage and enjoy all of the goodness that the in-season produce has to offer.

It's also a wise decision since there is such a strong connection between eating good food and experiencing good health.

Big city hospitals are just beginning now to catch on to something that RVH has been doing for years—serving up delicious high-quality food to our patients, staff and visitors.

"I'm incredibly proud of our dietary department and all of our staff for the fact that we've been ahead of the pack in this area of health care. It makes sense for us to continue serv-

ing up healthy food cooked on site using local ingredients when they're available," comments RVH's CEO and President, Randy Penney.

Our loyal team of cooks arrive in the kitchen at 5 a.m. to start hand chopping, mixing and flexing their culinary muscles by preparing the majority of food that is served on site from scratch.

Properly nourishing the body plays a vital part in the healing process for our patients, and that's a simple concept RVH's Director of Dietary Services, Pam Cranfield, recognized long ago.

She carefully plans appetizing hot menu feature items to serve in the busy Café Victoria and those same food items are delivered for breakfast, lunch and supper to the in-patients.

"If it's not good enough to serve in my cafeteria, I certainly won't feed it to my patients," Cranfield says of the 50-plus meals required daily to feed patients at each meal time.

Cranfield's philosophy has always been to provide healthier options, but give a choice of foods to eat. Yet, it's usually foods like their

special beef stew, fresh roast turkey or roast beef, chicken pot pies or salmon loaf that most folks will order.

She explains that many larger hospitals purchase food frozen and heat it on the plates before serving to patients—including toast.

"Toast is a problem," she laughs, "there's no way to make it not soggy when you have to put a dome over top to keep the rest of the breakfast warm. But at least we toast our bread here fresh every time."

Her cooks are real cooks, Cranfield boasts as one of her team stirs a steaming pot of fragrant homemade chili.

"When the food tastes better, our patients will eat better, and then hopefully they'll feel better as well," she notes.

Patients also can request a side salad with their meal and replace the dessert of the day with a piece of fresh fruit.

It all comes back to not having your typical pre-made hospital food anywhere on the menu.

"I know most places outsource and and serve pre-made hot cereals, but we do all of our Cream of Wheat and oatmeal here in the morning from scratch," says Cranfield.

Anything that has to be unpackaged and reheated is never as good as the real deal and that can be said for the hospital environment and for food served at home.

"And be creative. Enjoy fresh berries dipped in pudding or even better, vanilla yogurt," she suggests. "Getting in your recommended 7 to 10 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables isn't really that hard when you make it fun."

Visitors are welcome to sit down and enjoy a nutritious snack or try a full meal from Café Victoria during the weekdays. Friendly staff are there to help you choose from one or two main hot meal options, a salad bar or a made-to-order sandwich chosen from a variety of fillings, toppings and bread selections.

During non-staffed hours, a vending machine is stocked with a number of items made daily from the kitchen along with the usual snack fare.



Members of the dietary team at RVH, Pam Cranfield, Kim Schutt, Karen Lepine and Liz Corrigan, serve up tasty, nutritious meals cooked on site to patients and patrons of Café Victoria.