

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

A newsletter for the Maine Medical Center family

## No Foam? No Problem for MMC Nutrition Services

On April 15, the City of Portland will implement an ordinance that bans many businesses from using Styrofoam food and beverage containers. MMC Nutrition Services has been working for some time on a plan to comply with the law in a way that is more environmentally friendly.

Over the past several weeks, Styrofoam trays and clamshell salad bar packages have been replaced, and a new dishwasher was installed, allowing room service to use more china and silverware, cutting down on disposable goods. Polystyrene coffee cups will soon be a thing of the past, too, replaced by paper cups. Though the cup change will lead to a five-cent increase in soda and coffee prices, Nutrition Services is giving

employees an opportunity to earn a discount by bringing their own reusable cups. Any reusable cup will do, and the Impressions Café will sell travel mugs for \$4 — and the first cup of coffee is free with purchase.

“We’re excited to implement these new and innovative ways of reducing waste,” says Kevin O’Connor, Director of Nutrition Services. “How we treat the environment impacts the health of our employees and community, so we can all feel very good about this program.”

Composting is another environmentally conscious change for Nutrition Services. Started as a pilot program a few months ago, the kitchen crew has been separating food waste and other



*A variety of paper boat sizes are now available at the salad bar. The boats are compostable, unlike the old clamshell packaging.*

compostable waste, which is picked up by the company “We Compost It.” The composting has multiple benefits, including keeping food waste out of sewers (previously, food waste was ground down by a garbage disposal), and decreasing the cost of hauling trash.

Food waste, napkins, coffee grounds, and paper contain-

ers are all compostable. Café customers can now place their entire tray and trash on the return belt, and compostable items and recyclables will be separated by staff, making it easy for the customer. The Women’s Board of Maine Medical Center has generously and proudly agreed to sponsor the first year of composting.

In addition to composting, Nutrition Services is making an effort to cut down on food waste. Offering a la carte room service (implemented in 2013), measuring correct portion sizes, diligently following recipes, and using production sheets has all helped decrease food waste. They will also be introducing new plastic-ware that is less harmful to the environment.

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1

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