

RFK Jr. Takes His Eat-Real-Food Campaign to Hospital Trays

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March 30, 2026 at 4:55 PM EDT

US Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is asking hospitals to use his revamped food pyramid to redo their food menus offered to patients, regulators announced on Monday.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services sent a [memo](#) to hospitals asking them to limit ultra-processed food options for patients, though there's no formal definition for exactly what that means.

Instead the agency wants hospitals to transition to serving whole grains, eliminate sugary drinks and ensure meals have less than 10 grams of added sugar.

“The food is bland, it's poorly prepared, it's lacking nutrients of the nature you actually need for a full recovery,” CMS Administrator Mehmet Oz said at an event in Florida Monday.

Sample menu swaps in the memo included offering oatmeal with berries instead of cereal, plain yogurt instead of flavored, sweetened yogurt and freshly prepared lean protein instead of deli meats. It also recommends swapping no-sugar-added juice or low-sugar gelatin for patients recovering from surgery.

This effort comes as Kennedy's allies say they're seeing Trump administration [pullback](#) on his plans to overhaul vaccine policies, which polls show are unpopular. Instead, Kennedy has recently been pushing for people to [eat real food](#), a part of the Make America Healthy Again agenda that enjoys broader public support.

The Trump administration's [new dietary guidelines announced in January](#) emphasize eating more fruits, vegetables, healthy fats and proteins and cutting out added sugar. US dietary guidelines, which are updated every five years, provide guidance for federal purchasing of meals to feed members of the military, kids in school and inmates in prisons. While the government doesn't directly buy hospital food, federal health programs are a key source of revenue for hospitals.

Oz said that quality food offered in hospitals promotes healing, while Kennedy argued that transitions to healthier menus can be affordable.

School meal providers have said they [will need more funding](#) to change their meals to meet the new dietary guidelines. And hospitals, particularly those in rural areas, are already facing federal funding cuts to the Medicaid insurance for low-income people — sending people in the coming years.

The American Hospital Association did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the memo.