

Oral Nutritional Supplements* (ONS) in Care Homes Policy

This policy applies across Ipswich & East Suffolk and West Suffolk

From 01 September 2016, both the Ipswich & East and West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Groups do not support the prescribing of ONS for residents in care homes, unless one of the exclusion criteria listed below applies. Residents with a poor intake should be commenced on homemade milkshakes and food first instead of ONS.

This policy has been introduced because Regulation 14 of the Care Quality Commission Guidance for Providers¹ is clear that care homes are responsible for assessing and making the necessary arrangements for the provision of suitable nutrition and hydration for all residents. Residents in care homes should have their nutritional status documented on admission² and thereafter screened using the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) and the local policy guidelines followed^{3,4}. Food and fluid charts should be completed where there is risk of malnutrition or where malnutrition has been diagnosed. First line nutrition support is by food fortification for residents at medium (MUST score 1) or high (MUST score 2 or higher) risk of malnutrition. All care homes have the facilities to prepare fortified meals and high energy snacks where disease-related malnutrition is either a risk or is present. For residents with swallowing difficulties, liquidised or soft diets can also be provided.

Supportive resources are available on the CCG^{3,4} and Ipswich Hospital⁵ and West Suffolk Hospital⁶ dietetics websites. All care homes are offered training in identifying malnutrition, using MUST and in the principles of food fortification by the community dietetic services.

In addition to fortifying foods and drinks, there is the option of purchasing “over the counter” supplements such as:

- Complan® (Nutricia) milkshake or soup powders from supermarkets/pharmacies
- Nurishment® and Nurishment Extra® (Dunn’s River) from supermarkets and cash & carry wholesalers
- AYMES® retail range (AYMES) milkshake powder from pharmacies
- Meritene Energis® (Nestle) milkshake or soup powders from pharmacies

Exclusion criteria

ONS can continue to be prescribed for residents who:

- Require ONS to be administered via an enteral tube
- Require a specialist formula, e.g. Elemental 028 Extra
- Have been assessed as requiring ONS by a dietitian, after food fortification and homemade supplements have failed to result in weight gain or due to underlying clinical condition².

The Sip Feed Prescribing Guidelines for GPs and community staff provides advice on which first and second line sip feeds are recommended for residents who satisfy the exclusion criteria, based on cost and clinical effectiveness. A regular review of the ONS should always be documented in the care plan.

Residents on food first plans should continue to be screened regularly using MUST and referred to community dietitians as per local policy guidelines.

Concerns or complaints should be directed to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) tel. 0800 389 6819 or email pals@suffolk.nhs.uk

*ONS includes fortified food, additional snacks, sip feeds, semi-solid desserts, high energy/protein powders and liquids.

1 <http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/regulation-14-meeting-nutritional-and-hydration-needs>

2 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg32/chapter/1-Guidance>

3 <http://www.westsuffolkccg.nhs.uk>

4 <http://www.ipswichandeastsuffolkccg.nhs.uk>

5 <http://www.ipswichhospital.nhs.uk/dietetics/food-first/information-for-care-homes.htm>

6 <http://www.wsh.nhs.uk/ServicesAtoZ/ClinicalServices/N-P/NutritionandDietetics/NutritionandDietetics.aspx>