

Nutrition Support for Residents in Care Homes – Common Problems and Advice

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Introduction:

This document has been provided to help care homes with residents who require nutrition support.

Nutrition plays a vital role on helping people stay healthy and recover from illness.

This Information has been collated and adapted from resources by the Medicine Optimisation Specialist Dietitian for North and Mid Hampshire and the Dietitians on the Isle of Wight.

MUST Assessment Tool

MUST is a tool used to identify a person's risk of malnutrition:

Steps:

1. Record accurate **weight** and **height**
2. Calculate Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) score—online calculator:
<https://www.bapen.org.uk/screening-and-must/must-calculator>
3. Add scores together to get a total.

When **NOT** to use the MUST?

The MUST aims to detect malnutrition in order to prevent or treat it. Therefore when preventing or treating malnutrition is no longer a suitable goal, for example toward the end of life, MUST score is not needed. Nutritional Care Plans are still needed however but should focus on symptoms control, comfort, pleasure and best possible quality of life.

Interpreting MUST and Developing a Nutrition Action Plan

If MUST score = 0, Low risk – continue with standard nutrition care plan

If MUST score = 1, Medium risk – **Aim to increase kcal by 450-750 kcals/day**

E.g. two milky drinks (page 7 and 8). One food booster per meal, plus one nourishing snack (page 6)

If MUST score = 2 or more, High risk - **provide extra 750- 1350 kcals/day**

E.g. Two milky drinks, two food boosters per meal and two nourishing snacks.

If after 1 month of implementing food first advice, resident continues to lose weight and MUST 3 or more – speak with GP to arrange a dietitian referral if appropriate.

Remember

The **barrier** to eating and drinking should be addressed **first**.

See page 10 for more details about this.

MUST=1

Or eating 50-75% of their meals consistently

Weekly Food First Prescription Chart

Please refer to food lists and recipes

Resident's name: _____ Week beginning: _____

Chef aware Yes / No	Time	Topper/snack/drink given: List patient preferences for each	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Food booster Aim to add at least 50kcal on top of usual meal eaten	Breakfast								
	Lunch								
	Supper								
Extra snack Aim for 1 snack (at least 100kcal) <u>in addition</u> to usual intake. Give at resident's preferred time	Mid-morning OR								
	Mid-afternoon OR								
	Evening								
Nourishing Drink Aim for 1 drink (200-600kcal) <u>in addition</u> to usual intake. Give at resident's preferred time	Mid-morning OR								
	Mid-afternoon OR								
	Evening								

MUST=2 or more

Weekly Food First Prescription Chart

Or often eating less than half of their meals

Please refer to food lists and recipes

Resident's name: _____ Week beginning: _____

Chef aware Yes / No	Time	Topper/snack/drink given: List patient preferences for each	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
2 x 50kcal meal toppers Aim to add 100kcal on top of usual meal eaten (2 toppers per meal or 1 per dish)	Breakfast								
	Lunch								
	Supper								
Extra snacks Aim for 2 snacks (200kcal) in addition to usual intake. Give at resident's preferred time	Mid-morning &/OR								
	Mid-afternoon &/OR								
	Evening								
Nourishing Drink Aim for 2 drinks (400-1200kcal) in addition to usual intake. Give at resident's preferred time	Mid-morning &/OR								
	Mid-afternoon &/OR								
	Evening								

Chef's checklist:

Residents requiring food fortification or texture modification

Update the list weekly and make sure all kitchen staff are aware of it

Chefs should be involved with discussing food preferences with residents to make sure the diet provided is suitable and palatable

Information on this list will link with the individual resident's care plan

Week starting: _____

Resident	MUST Score	Food Fortification		Texture Modified Diet		Thickened Drinks		Notes
		Y/N	Details	Y/N	Details	Y/N	Details	

MUST = 1 (or eating 50-75% at meals) - **medium risk** of malnutrition: 1 x 50kcal topper for each meal + 1 snack + 1 nourishing drink each day

MUST = 2 or more (or eating less than 50% of meals) - **high risk** of malnutrition: 2 x 50kcal topper for each meal + 2 snacks + 2 nourishing drinks each day

Food Boosters

Food Booster	Portion Size	Calories	Add to...
Double cream	Two tablespoons (30ml)	140	Mashed potato, puddings, sauces, soups, fruit salad, milky drinks
Cheese	Matchbox size (30g)	120	Mashed potato, vegetables, crackers, crumpets, sandwiches, toast
Butter	One teaspoon (10g)	75	
Oil	One tablespoon (15ml)	120	Pasta, salad dressing, mashed potato, use for frying
Peanut butter	One tablespoon (15g)	100	Crumpets, toast, sandwiches, banana, rice cakes
Jam/Honey	One tablespoon (15g)	45	Crumpets, toast, porridge, rice pudding
Full fat mayonnaise	One tablespoon (15g)	100	Sandwiches, salad, vegetables, potatoes
Milk powder	One tablespoon (10g)	35	Mix into yoghurt, custard, milk, milky puddings

Nourishing Snack Ideas

Have **2 Nourishing snacks** each day between meals. A little and often approach can help prevent weight loss and promote weight gain.

About 100-150 calories

5 Cocktail sausages*
 3 Mini sausage rolls
 1 Salami stick (22.5g)*
 1 Boiled egg with 1 tbsp. mayonnaise*
 1 Small packet of crisps (25g)
 1 Mini Swiss roll or a jam tart
 2 Digestive biscuits
 3 Rich tea biscuits
 2 Bite-sized flapjacks
 2 Scoops (90g) dairy ice-cream
 125g Pot of soya dessert
 150g Pot of rice pudding*

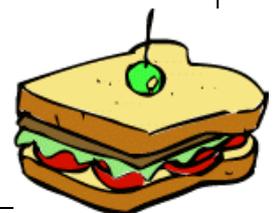
About 200 calories

1 Mini pork pie (50g)*
 2 Vegetable spring rolls (80g)*
 1 Sausage roll (60g) with 1 tbsp. tomato sauce*
 30g Cheese with 3 crackers
 ¼ Quiche (100g)**
 ½ Avocado on 1 slice of toast
 1 Slice of cake
 2 Shortbread fingers
 1 Crumpet with butter & jam
 1 Jam doughnut / cream cake
 145g Pot of trifle
 125g Pot of luxury yoghurt*
 150g Full fat yoghurt*

About 300 calories

Pitta bread with 50g houmous*
 Sandwich (2 slices of bread, butter, meat / cheese / egg)**
 1 Small bag (50g) peanuts**
 ¼ 12" Pizza
 1 Scotch egg (113g)**
 40g Pâté on 2 slices toast**
 2 Slices smoked salmon with 60g cream cheese**
 1 Scone with butter & jam
 1 Individual sponge pudding*

*Contains more than 5g protein per portion ** Contains more than 10g protein per portion
 N.B. tbsp. = tablespoon



Fortified Milk

One easy method of boosting energy and protein intake is by switching to whole (4%) milk, skimmed milk powder (found in the baking section of supermarket) can be added to boost the nutritional content to create fortified milk.

Recipe:

1 Pint Whole 4% milk (375kcals)

4 Tablespoons Skimmed Milk Powder (140kcals) found in the supermarket baking section

Fortified Milk (515 kcals)

Method: Mix the powder to a paste with a little cold milk, then mix in the remainder. Use as normal milk.

Nourishing Drink Ideas & Tips

Why not try a nourishing milkshake?

(Makes 2 servings—keep the other portion in the fridge for up to 24 hours)

- ½ pint (284ml) whole / full fat milk
- 4 tablespoons (40g) dried milk powder
- 3 ½ tablespoons (50ml) double cream

1. Put the milk powder into a jug
2. Add a small amount of milk and mix into a paste
3. Add the remaining milk, cream and any 'extras' to taste (listed in the next column)
4. Mix well by hand OR combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.

Each glass provides at least 300 calories and 12g protein.

Milkshake extra ideas (for 2 servings)

- choose your favourite flavour(s) and enjoy!

By hand:

- 8 heaped teaspoons milkshake powder or hot chocolate powder
- 3-4 tablespoons (50ml) of milkshake syrup

Using a blender:

- 4 tablespoons of smooth peanut butter
- 4 tablespoons chocolate spread
- A handful of strawberries/frozen berries
- 1 banana
- 1 chocolate bar
- Coffee

Handy Hints to Improve Your Intake

- Aim to have two nourishing drinks per day.
- Have drinks between meal times so that they do not fill you up too much.
- If large volumes are difficult to manage: keep made-up nourishing drinks in the fridge (if appropriate) and have smaller servings throughout the day.
- If you are still struggling to gain weight, consider buying over the counter nutritional supplement soups or milkshakes e.g. Complan, Meritene Energis, Aymes which are available from pharmacies or supermarkets. They come in neutral, sweet and savoury flavours and both powdered and ready to drink preparations. These should be taken in addition to meals.

Nourishing Drink Ideas

Mix by Hand/Blender:

Fruity Float

- ½ glass (100ml) fruit juice
- ½ glass (100ml) lemonade
- 1 tbsp. sugar (15g)
- 1 scoop (80g) ice cream

Malt Honey Drink

- 1 glass (200ml) fortified milk
- 1 tbsp. honey
- 1 scoop ice-cream
- 1 tsp. malted drink powder

Milkshake

- 3 tsp. milkshake powder
- 200ml fortified milk
- 1 scoop vanilla ice cream

Greek Cooler

- 100g Greek yogurt
- 2 tbsp. honey
- 100ml fortified milk

Super Soup

- 1 sachet cup-a-soup
- 200ml warmed fortified milk
- 2 tbsp. double cream/grated cheese

Yogurt Shake

- 3 tsp. milkshake powder
- 1 glass (200ml) fortified milk
- Small pot luxury fruit yogurt

Iced Coffee

- 2 tsp. coffee granules
- 200ml fortified milk
- Sugar to taste

Cinnamon Spice

- 1 glass (200ml) fortified milk
- 1 tbsp. golden syrup
- Ground cinnamon and/or mixed spice to taste

Mix Using a Blender:

(For each recipe mix the ingredients in a blender until smooth)

Biscuit Cream Cooler

- 4 chocolate/cream filled biscuits e.g. bourbon or custard creams
- 200ml fortified milk
- 2 tbsp. condensed milk

Fruit Smoothie

- 1 glass (200ml) fruit juice
- Handful frozen berries
- 1 banana
- 5g sachet egg white powder

Coffee Banoffee

- 1 banana
- 150ml fortified milk
- 1 crème caramel
- 1 tsp. golden syrup
- 1-2 tsp. coffee granules

Chocolate Banana Shake

- 1 banana
- 1 glass (200ml) fortified milk
- 1 tbsp. oats
- 1 tbsp. peanut butter
- 1 tbsp. cocoa powder

Peach & Honey Smoothie

- 150ml orange juice
- 1 banana
- 3-4 tbsp. tinned peaches in syrup
- 1 tsp. honey
- 5g sachet egg white powder

Banoffee Treat

- 1 banana
- 150ml fortified milk
- 1 crème caramel pudding
- 1 tsp. golden syrup



Eton Mess Shake

- 1 meringue nest crushed
- 150ml fortified milk
- 2.5 tbsp. strawberry milkshake powder
- 1-2 tsp. strawberry jam

Coconut Smoothie

- 100ml coconut milk (avoid low fat versions)
- 150ml orange juice
- 1 banana
- 1 tbsp. smooth peanut butter
- 1 tbsp. maple/golden syrup
- 2 tsp. honey

Milky Smoothie

- 1 glass (200ml) fortified milk
- ½ small carton thick and creamy fruit yoghurt
- 1 scoop ice cream
- 1 tsp. of honey
- Soft fruit of your choice

Peach & Berry Smoothie

- 1 glass (200ml) fortified milk
- ½ tin peaches
- Handful frozen berries
- 3 tbsp. Greek yoghurt/dairy free alternative
- 1 tbsp. oats
- 2 tsp. honey

N.B. tsp. = teaspoon, tbsp. = tablespoon

The best option for a milk alternative would be whole, lactose free milk if you are able to tolerate this; alternatively use calcium enriched soya or oat milk.

General Nutrition Guidance

- ◆ Although **MUST screening is best practice** to identify malnutrition. We understand that it might not be easy for routine MUST screening for your residents during this time. Therefore:
 - Other measures of nutritional status can be used such as **using food charts to determine intake and develop a nutrition plan of action** if it is not possible to screen all of your residents.
- ◆ Use the recipes from the 'Nutrition support' and "nourishing drinks for care homes" diet sheets to help support your residents nutritionally.
- ◆ **Little and often** may be easier if the resident is short of breath instead of 3 larger meals.
- ◆ **Nourishing drinks** could be a great and easy way to support your resident nutritionally especially if the resident is short of breath – see recipes on page 7 and 8. This can be made up in a big batch and kept in the kitchen for use throughout the day.
- ◆ If the resident has taste changes look for oral thrush, soreness and dryness and offer appropriate mouth care. A clean healthy mouth is essential – encourage regular mouth care
- ◆ **ALWAYS check the texture suitability for food and fluids.**
- ◆ If the resident has a preference for sweet foods, that is ok – **offer extra puddings as a high calorie snack.**
- ◆ **Discuss favourite foods/preferences** with the resident and ensure mealtimes are as relaxing and free from distraction as possible
- ◆ Offer assistance with feeding and drinking as required.
- ◆ Encourage to eat more when feeling well/alert. Ensure your resident is positioned upright and **assisted if necessary during mealtimes and when giving snacks and fluids**
- ◆ Special utensils, plate guards or finger foods may be helpful
- ◆ During this time, if you are concerned about a resident's risk of malnutrition i.e. MUST 3 or more **and** you have implemented the above advice; please flag to the GP for a referral to the dietitians.

*All relevant medical practice and care guidance **must be observed before considering these suggestions.***

Addressing Barriers to Eating and Drinking

Issue noticed	Possible intervention
Meal being refused	Review taste and preferences Check consistency Assist if needed Review timing of snacks/drinks
Poor intake at certain times of day	Make the most of other meals Offer preferred foods Try snacks and drink rather than a full meal A plate of finger foods may also be useful
Preference for savoury over sweet or vice-versa	A nutritious diet can be met with both, Offer extra portions of preferred dish(es)
Fluid intake is poor	Increase encouragement given Ensure fluid is offered every hour Identify residents (e.g.: using different coloured cups / glasses) so everyone can encourage intake Discuss the importance of fluid intake with resident and relatives.
No snacks during the day	Discuss preferences Offer a snack at specific times Discuss importance of snacks if needed
Often leaves the meat	Review preferences Check consistency, may need extra sauces/pureed meat portion Make up protein intake with eggs, milk powder, beans, lentils, nuts (use nut butter or ground nuts)
Lack of a particular food group	Discuss and review preferences Identify other means of providing food groups (e.g. if lack of fruit and veg, try smoothies or juices) Consider Vitamin and mineral supplementation (e.g. calcium and vitamin D if little dairy consumed)

Eating and Drinking towards the End of Life

End of life

In the final stages of a life-limiting illness, when someone is approaching the end of his or her life the focus of care for the person may change and tends to be centred on helping them to be as comfortable as possible.

Food and drink

At this time, people often experience a decrease in appetite and a loss of interest in food and drink.

This can be worrying for families and carers but it is a natural and expected part of the dying process. Most people at the end of life do not experience hunger or thirst. The body is slowing down, and if someone eats or drinks more than they really want to it can cause them discomfort.

Families and carers may be concerned about the effects of reduced food intake or dehydration on the person who is dying, and it is natural for families to want to continue providing nourishment at this time.

Nutrition or nourishment?

At this stage of life, meeting nutritional needs becomes less important than providing comfort, and even very small amounts of the person's favourite food and drink can provide comfort.

- ◆ Tube feeding Fluid via a drip or 'food' via a feeding tube do not usually provide comfort, improve quality of life or prolong life and can be distressing for the person who is dying.
- ◆ Prescribed nutritional products do not contain anything which can't be found in food, and most people seem to prefer the flavour of ordinary food. Food means much more to most people than simply nutrition, and at the end of life enjoyment of even small amounts of food and fluid is more important than its nutritional content.

Many families find it helpful to look at other ways in which they can provide 'nourishment', comfort and support for their loved one.

Other ideas that may help

- ◆ Keep asking "what is helpful for this person at this time?" - there is no single 'right' answer as it depends on each person's individual situation
- ◆ Continue to offer other forms of support such as gentle massage, skin care, music and conversation
- ◆ Keep the person company - talk to them, read to them, watch films together, or simply sit and hold their hand
- ◆ Even when people cannot speak or smile, their need for companionship remains. The person may no longer recognise you, but may still draw comfort from your touch or the sound of your voice

What about food?

- ◆ Let the person choose if and when they want to eat or drink
- ◆ Offer small amounts of food, especially the person's favourite flavours
- ◆ Don't worry about providing a balanced diet
- ◆ See the enclosed ideas for small snacks and nutritious drinks and homemade supplement recipes

What about drinks?

- ◆ Frequent mouth care (gently brushing teeth with a soft toothbrush) can prevent the person feeling thirsty, even if they cannot drink very much
- ◆ Keep lips moist with lip balm
- ◆ Use a small spray bottle to mist the mouth with water, being careful not to give too much
- ◆ Offer small pieces of ice or small ice lollies instead of drinks

Small snacks

Small portions of food, which do not need a lot of chewing may be easier to manage.

- ◆ Suggestions:
- ◆ Mini tub of yogurt, fromage frais, dessert or custard (often sold in multipacks)
- ◆ Mini ice cream lolly or mini tub of ice cream
- ◆ Small pieces of prepared, soft fruit e.g. mango, melon, grapes, orange segments
- ◆ Favourite sweets or squares of chocolate
- ◆ Small pieces of scone with butter and jam or lemon curd
- ◆ Mini tub of cream cheese or cheese spread – these could be served with soft bread
- ◆ Quarter of a sandwich with a soft filling e.g. egg mayonnaise, tuna mayonnaise, pâté
- ◆ Cocktail sausages, mini sausage rolls, mini quiches or mini scotch eggs
- ◆ Squares of cheese
- ◆ A few 'soft' crisps such as Quavers or Wotsits

Nutritious drinks

Small cups or glasses may be easier to manage. If the person can only manage half a glass or cup, they may still find it easier to drink from a full cup or glass. This can make swallowing easier because the person does not have to tip their head back as far.

Sips of citrus flavour drinks may help if the person has a dry mouth.

Suggestions:

- ◆ Milkshakes
- ◆ Milky coffee
- ◆ Hot chocolate
- ◆ Malted milk drinks
- ◆ Smoothies
- ◆ Fizzy drinks

Developed by Alison Smith, Prescribing Support Dietitian, Aylesbury Vale & Chiltern CCGs in collaboration with Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust Dietetic Department and Florence Nightingale Hospice 2015

During this time, if you are concerned about a resident's risk of malnutrition i.e. MUST 3 or more **and** you have implemented the above advice; please flag to the GP.

Further information can be found online at: <https://www.isleofwightccg.nhs.uk/nutrition-support.htm>