

A Guide to Prescribing Adult Oral Nutritional Supplements

East Kent CCGs



Foreword

This guideline has been designed to support primary care prescribers initiating nutrition support for adults in East Kent.

Malnutrition, in terms of undernourishment, is both a cause and consequence of disease in adults. It is common and affects over 3 million people in the UK with associated health costs exceeding £13 billion annually. Adverse effects include:

- Weight loss
- Muscle wasting and reduced strength
- Reduced respiratory muscle function - increasing the risk of chest infection and respiratory failure
- Reduced cardiac function
- Impaired immune function - increasing risk of infection
- Increased susceptibility to pressure ulcers
- Oedema
- Apathy, depression and self-neglect
- Increased mortality and morbidity

There are also significant healthcare costs related to malnutrition. Malnourished people have more hospital admissions; longer length of stay and more readmissions; more GP visits and prescriptions. The overall healthcare cost is more than double that of a non-malnourished individual.

Therefore, it is important to identify and treat patients who are malnourished or at risk of becoming malnourished, as soon as possible. However, this does not mean that all such patients require oral nutritional supplements (ONS).

Individuals who are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition are best treated in the first instance with food - this is known as the 'food first' approach. However all too often ONS are used as a first line treatment without individuals being advised to increase their energy and protein intakes from food first. This results in inappropriate use of ONS with increased prescribing costs.

Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Service
Kent Community Health Foundation Trust
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Key Messages

- The food first approach should always be used initially. Provide patient with a nutrition advice sheet – “Your guide to making the most of your food”.
- Weigh the patient at their first appointment and thereafter at each review visit
- For initial ONS prescriptions use first line product , Amyes shake
- Use starter packs for Aymes Shake using the “direct to patient sampling service”
- Review patient monthly (weight, changes in dietary intake, compliance with ONS)
- If no improvement in outcomes after 2 months, refer to a Community dietitian
- Avoid prescribing 1 kcal/ml ONS products e.g. Ensure can or Fresubin original. They contain less nutritional benefit and are not as cost effective
- G.P should no longer initiate Calogen or Procal Shots prescriptions, unless advocated by a dietitian. These are expensive fat emulsion products. Double cream is an equivalent substitute.

For example, 30ml double cream three times a day is equivalent to 30ml Calogen or Procal shot three times a day, both providing an equivalent of 405 kcals
- G.P to stop Calogen / Procal Shot prescriptions for patients in care homes. Double cream is an equivalent substitute.
- Avoid Prescriptions of one ONS per day as there is no improved clinical outcome
- Patients in the final weeks of life are unlikely to benefit from an ONS prescription. There are over the counter products that could be suggested as alternatives e.g. Build-up and Complan.

Food First Approach

The CCG supports a 'Food first' policy and patients should be provided with practical advice on ways to make meals and snacks more nutritious by increasing the protein and energy in their diets using everyday food. This should always be the first strategy for treating malnutrition.

The nutrition advice sheet "Your guide to making the most of your food" should be provided to patients or carers.

First line ONS Powder

ONS powder starter packs

If food first has not improved nutritional intake, start ONS first line powder starter packs.

This should be dispensed to avoid wastage, in case of product not being well tolerated

Each sachet to be made up with 200ml of full fat milk

Product	Starter pack
Aymes Shake	Direct to patient sampling service: Free service any queries direct to the prescribing advisors

Product	Unit	Nutritional profile per serving
Aymes Shake	57g sachet to be mixed with 200ml of full fat milk Mixed using a fork method	389kcal 17g protein Contains lactose

Second line ONS

If the patient is non-compliant or non-tolerant to the first line ONS, prescribe alternative supplement options from borderline substances in the BNF.

Product 2.4 kcal/ml	Unit	Nutritional profile per serving
Aymes Complete	Ready to drink milkshake, 200ml	300 kcal 12g protein
Product 1.5 kcal/ml	Unit	Nutritional profile per serving
Altraplen Compact	Ready to drink milkshake, compact size, 125ml	300 kcal 12g protein
Product 1.5 kcal/ml Juice option	Unit	Nutritional profile per serving
Fresubin Jucy Drink	Ready to drink juice style supplement	300kcal, 8g protein

Patients requiring thickened fluids

Standard ONS do not thicken appropriately using thickeners and may then be unsafe and/or unpalatable for patients needing thickened fluids. It is recommended that all patients requiring ONS and thickened fluids are referred to the dietitian. The Following products may be used pending assessment, for patients with thickened fluids recommendations from the Speech and language therapist (SLT):

First line for **syrup thick** consistency - Altraplen Compact 125ml

First line for **custard and pudding thick** - Nutricrem 125g

Aymes Shake and Aymes Complete are suitable for patients requiring **naturally thick fluids**

It is recommended that advice is sought from SLT if there are any concerns regarding dysphagia. Pre thickened supplements or alternative pudding style supplements may be recommended by the dietitian if the first line options are not tolerated.

How do you refer to the Dietitian?

A referral to the dietitians is recommended for complex patients or those with multiple nutritional needs. Referrals should also be made if first line ONS and dietary advice is insufficient to achieve treatment goals or nutritional status deteriorates.

The Community Nutrition Service provides regular clinics at various locations across East Kent, home visits for housebound patients, care home visits and a service to the community hospitals.

Patients should be referred to the Community Nutrition Service via the referral form.

Please ensure you have checked the adult referral inclusion and exclusion criteria before referring.

All referrals or queries should be sent to: kcht.centralisedappointmentteam@nhs.net

Contact details:

Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics

Tel: 0300 1230861

Email: kcht.centralisedappointmentteam@nhs.net