

Prescribing Oral Nutrition Supplements for care home residents

Key Points

- Regulation 14 of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Guidance for Providers is very clear that homes are responsible for assessing and making the necessary arrangements for the provision of suitable nutrition and hydration for all residents.
- All care and nursing homes have facilities to prepare fortified meals and high energy snacks where disease-related malnutrition is present, as well as liquidised diets for residents with swallowing difficulties
- Prescribing of Oral Nutrition Supplements (ONS) is no longer supported for care home residents except in defined circumstances
- There is also the option of purchasing “over the counter” supplements such as Complan[®] (Nutricia) or Nurishment[®] (Dunn’s River).

Nutritional status

Resident’s nutritional status should continue to be monitored using MUST scores. Where a patient is identified to be at medium or high risk of malnutrition, their food should be fortified; this means adding ingredients to normal food to increase energy content without increasing the volume of food which needs to be eaten. Together with two or three snacks or milky drinks between meals the aim is to increase energy intake by around 500 kilocalories per day.

Residents currently having two ONS a day between meals could be given high energy snacks or homemade supplements in addition to a fortified diet. Leaflets giving information on fortifying food, recipes for supplements to replace ONS and snack options are available on the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Prescribing Group website](#).

Circumstances where ONS prescribing is agreed as clinically appropriate

It has been agreed that the prescribing of ONS is clinically necessary in the following defined clinical circumstances as such patients will be under the care of dietetics for their nutritional needs:

- patients with motor neurone disease,
- patients with head / neck cancer and those
- patients receiving sip feeds via a PEG tube.
- Patients with pressure ulcers who require short term high protein diet to aid healing (in this situation Protifar powder or Prosource Jelly is recommended)